

JUDAISM

INTERFAITH AT FIFTY

An Evaluation of the Movement by Catholics,
Protestants and Jews

Eliezer Berkovits

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Alice and Roy Eckardt

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JUDAISM, conceived as a free and non-partisan organ, is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society. Through an exploration of the meaning and needs of the Jewish experience, it hopes to widen the channels of communication between Jews and to affirm Jewish verity and vitality to the world at large.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a worldview on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God." *From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.*

A STATEMENT ON POLICY

One of the most rewarding aspects of editing JUDAISM has been the extensive and growing amount of excellent material being submitted for publication in our columns. Many well-known and distinguished names are to be found among our contributors. In addition, we believe that the journal has played a significant role in stimulating scholarship and thought among many younger writers in various fields who have been led to work in the areas of Jewish philosophy, religion and ethics, in part, at least, because a medium is available for the publication of the product of their research and thought.

In JUDAISM, all points of view find free access to a growing body of thoughtful readers. It serves, therefore, not only as a medium of expression, but also as a forum for discussion and communication across the various viewpoints and ideologies prevalent today in Jewish life and in society as a whole. This is an especially valuable function in an age when urbanity and mutual respect are, unfortunately, in short supply. The various symposia we have initiated and published in recent years are basic resource material both because of their intrinsic content and the broad spectrum of views which they embody.

It is literally true that, at any time, we could publish three issues of the journal with material already accepted for publication in JUDAISM. But this encouraging state of affairs has brought a problem in its wake. Our authors are called upon to exercise considerable patience in waiting for the appearance of their contributions in our columns. Their cooperation and understanding have always been greatly appreciated.

In view of this situation, it seems quixotic to announce a broadening of our editorial policy. As our readers know, historical analyses and literary criticism on Jewish writers, past and present, have been appearing with fair regularity in our journal. We take pleasure in announcing that we shall henceforth be pleased to receive contributions in the field of *belles lettres*, primarily fiction and poetry, related to Jewish life and thought. Authors of short stories and poetry are, therefore, invited to submit their material to JUDAISM. We hope that this new departure will stimulate creative activity among contemporary writers. We shall, of course, be interested basically in material bearing upon the religious and ethical content of Jewish life, but it goes without saying that the fiction and poetry submitted to us will be evaluated primarily in terms of esthetic quality. Whether the experiment will succeed or not only time will reveal.

It need not be emphasized that the basic concerns of this journal remain Jewish religion, philosophy and ethics. Our goal is the enhancement of Judaism in all its manifestations, as a way of life, as a religious and ethical world-view, as a colorful and rewarding culture, and, therefore, as a richly significant element in the spiritual treasure-house of humankind.

Robert Gordis
Editor

The First Reader

An Anniversary of Great Significance

The major portion of the current issue of JUDAISM is dedicated to an evaluation of a phenomenon in the history of religion which is peculiarly American—the emergence and growth of the interfaith movement.

The Covenant That Made Jews Different From All Other Nations

Some two decades ago, Mid-Eastern archaeology uncovered a collection of treaties between Hittite kings and other monarchs on the one hand, and between kings and vassals on the other. The study of these different types of treaty stimulated research into the “covenant relationship” which is so fundamental an element in Biblical history and religion.

In his paper, “The New Covenant of Moses,” *Robert Allan Hammer* applies these categories to the tragic rupture between God and Israel which followed the sin of the Golden Calf. He suggests that, in pleading for his people, Moses invoked the two distinct covenants that God had made, one with the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which was basically an unconditional “grant-treaty,” the other with the people of Israel, which was a conditional “covenant-treaty” with obligations to be observed on both sides.

An Early Exponent of “Interfaith”

The path of interreligious understanding has not been an easy one, even in the second half of the twentieth century. Deeply rooted prejudices and long-standing unpleasant memories have fostered suspicions on both sides of the Jewish-Christian encounter. In her paper, “Rabbi Jacob Emden: The View of An Enlightened Traditionalist on Christianity,” *Blu Greenberg* highlights the attitude toward Christianity of Jacob Emden, one of the most important rabbis of the eighteenth century.

Emden, like his much earlier predecessor, Menahem Meiri, may be described as a pioneer in the Jewish understanding of Christianity on the basis of its theological and ethical content, as distinct from the unfortunate history of the Jewish-Christian relationship.

A Contemporary Ideologue

It has been pointed out repeatedly that our age is marked by “the death of ideology.” Comprehensive, well-structured systems of thought have fallen out of favor in our day. The reason may well inhere in the fact that ours is an age of dissolving values, and the time for their reconstruction has not yet dawned.

Nonetheless, there are individual thinkers who do not rest satisfied with *shibhrei luhot*, “broken fragments of the Tablets of the Law.” They are unwilling to react on a “pragmatic,” *ad hoc* basis to each problem as it arises. They continue to strive after an organized worldview, in the light of which the solutions they seek for each individual issue come to light.

Labor Zionism, whose ideologues in the past included Ber Borochov, A.D. Gordon, and Nahman Syrkin, finds its most articulate American spokesman in our day in Ben Halpern. His ideas are the subject of a paper by Sharon Muller entitled “The Zionism of Ben Halpern.”

R.G.

Interfaith At Fifty—An Evaluation

ROBERT GORDIS

ONE OF THE PENALTIES OF BEING CLOSE TO events and people is that we often fail to recognize their importance. Because of our proximity, we see the warts all too clearly, but often do not appreciate the spirit within men and movements. A striking case in point is afforded by the interfaith movement. Even those committed to it are aware of goals not attained, while those negatively disposed have no difficulty in pointing to its shortcomings, primarily sins of omission. Nevertheless, the future historian of the twentieth century will surely reckon the interfaith movement as a unique phenomenon in the history of religion and a major American contribution to contemporary civilization.

There were, of course, in the past, a few great-souled spirits in various religious groups who were the exceptions to the rule. But, generally, it was believed that people of different traditions could relate to one another only in hostility and not with mutual respect. Until the twentieth century, it seemed a utopian dream to expect that men and women, strongly attached to a specific religious tradition, could replace those deep antagonisms by a sincere effort to understand not only the elements of agreement with their neighbors, but, also, their differences, for it was necessary to evaluate fairly both the universal truths that all great religions hold in common and the particular modes of worship and practice that each tradition possesses for expressing its vision of life.

The road-blocks to interfaith understanding and cooperation were particularly massive in the case of Judaism and Christianity. For nineteen hundred years, these two faiths of the Western world had not only gone their separate ways but had written a tragic record of enmity expressed in countless ways, ranging from relatively minor forms of discrimination to major persecutions and culminating in the mass murder of genocide.

Nevertheless, in spite of heavy burdens of guilt from the past and dark dangers in the present—or because of them—the interfaith movement was launched. At its inception, it may well have seemed a Don Quixote tilting with windmills, but it survived and grew.

In editing this journal, it has been our constant endeavor to explore, as well as is possible, the various facets of religion, philosophy and ethics that are relevant to modern Jews and Judaism. Accordingly, it occurred to us, in 1977, to undertake a broad-based survey of the interfaith movement. We then discovered that we had prophesied better than we knew—the year 1978 is the fiftieth anniversary of the movement. It was in 1928 that the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the pioneer and major agency in this field, was organized.

Invitations were extended to a group of scholars, thinkers and community leaders—Catholic, Protestant and Jewish—representing the various schools of thought within each faith-community, to participate in a symposium on “Interfaith At Fifty.” The scope of the symposium and the basic areas of concern are indicated in the following paragraphs drawn from the letter of invitation that was sent to the contributors:

Without pretending to exhaust all the ramifications of the topic, the following aspects seem to us worthy of discussion:

What factors led to the rise of the interfaith movement in America? To what extent are they operative today?

What has been the effect of interfaith activity on the quality of intergroup relations? Are there any objective criteria for measuring the results?

How has the Holocaust affected the interfaith movement, both in the decades past and in the present? How has the interfaith movement been able to generate a response to the Holocaust in the Christian community?

What has been the effect of the creation and the continuous existence of the State of Israel on intergroup relations in America? What contributions has the interfaith movement made toward an understanding of the problems of the Middle East in general and of the needs and goals of the State of Israel in particular?

How have the changed and changing attitudes in the Catholic church been reflected in the interfaith movement?

What has been the effect of Christian missionary campaigns on intergroup relations? What has been the impact in this field of the “Jews for Jesus” and similar groups?”

How has the proliferation of new religious cults outside the established denominations affected inter-religious dialogue?

You may wish to address yourself to all or most of these questions, or you may wish to treat them in an altogether different framework. Please feel free to approach the theme in any way you see fit.

The response to the invitation was most heartening. With few exceptions, the lay and professional leaders in this field, as well as knowledgeable observers of the contemporary scene, accepted with enthusiasm. What is at least equally important is that the papers submitted are of extraordinarily high caliber, marked by knowledge, insight and honesty. They constitute a major contribution to self-understanding for twentieth century devotees of religion, as well as for all men and women who, in an age of confrontation, chaos and dissolving loyalties, are concerned with the preservation of the ideals of brotherhood and the common weal.

The words of candor and of love to be found in the following pages testify that there still beats powerfully in the human breast the prophetic faith that the day must come “when man shall do no evil and work no destruction on all My holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9).

The anniversary being noted in the title of this symposium refers, as mentioned above, to the National Conference of Christians and Jews, organized in 1928. Its president, David Hyatt, in his paper, “The Interfaith Movement,” presents a comprehensive survey of the contributions

of this basic agency to interfaith understanding, and indicates the important transformations that have taken place in the content of its activities as a result of the historic events of the past half century.

Among the pioneers of the interfaith movement in America, with impressive credentials of service to a wide spectrum of causes, including Jewish religious life, the Zionist movement, social justice and civil rights is Israel Goldstein, now a resident of Israel. In a paper entitled "Pioneering in America and in Israel" he recalls the early stages of the movement in the United States and supplements his reminiscences by observations on activity in this area in the State of Israel, in which he has been a prime mover.

Probably the oldest ongoing institution dedicated to interfaith study and discussion is the Institute for Religious and Social Studies of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Founded four decades ago by Dr. Louis Finkelstein, it has been directed, throughout its career, by Jessica Feingold, who presents a detailed survey of its unique work in "Up From Isolation—Intergroup Activities at the Seminary."

How the cooperative activities of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish clergy (latterly augmented by representatives of religions outside the Judeo-Christian tradition) can affect the larger community is graphically described by Alfred Wolf in "A Tale of One City." If the future of America is to be discerned in California, as is popular believed—particularly in California—the shape of things to come may perhaps be seen in the impressive program of interfaith activities carried on in Los Angeles and described in this paper.

In 1215, the Lateran Council enacted a series of restrictive decrees against Jews which remained normative for Catholic thought and action for centuries. It is only within the space of the past generation that the full extent of the reversal in the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward Jews and Judaism has taken place and it is nothing less than revolutionary. In a paper thus titled, "Catholic Statements on Jews—A Revolution in Progress," Leonard Swidler documents the extent of the change in all the critical areas, such as anti-Semitism, deicide, the New Testament references to Jews and Judaism, the Jewishness of Jesus and the Jewish roots of Christianity, missionary activity, and the role of dialogue. The author underscores the fact that declarations do not make revolutions, but they can lay the groundwork for a far-reaching transformation in human relationships.

On a closely related aspect, John B. Sheerin, in "Has Interfaith a Future?" presents a survey of activities within the Catholic Church that have been designed to advance Christian-Jewish understanding. The author does not content himself with presenting the factual material alone. He faces up candidly to some of the basic problems confronting the interfaith movement, and makes reference to the resounding silence of the Christian churches with regard to Israel and the perils that have

confronted it during the past decades. He also notes the inability, or unwillingness, of many Christian leaders to appreciate the strength and the unique character of the bond between modern Jews and the land of Israel. Finally, he calls attention to what is perhaps the greatest weakness of the interfaith movement thus far—its inability to penetrate the consciousness and the conscience of ordinary church-goers, the grass roots memberships in religious communities, while the dialogue remains limited to the higher echelons of organized religion.

In a paper on "Zionism, the State of Israel, and the Jewish-Christian Dialogue," Edward H. Flannery presents a striking analysis of the background of the interfaith movement. He challenges widely accepted views on the subject in several respects. Thus, he believes that it was not the interfaith movement that stimulated Christian awareness of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. On the contrary, he maintains, the primary factor was the establishment of the State of Israel as a Jewish homeland and, secondarily, the unspeakable horror of the Holocaust that stimulated the search for avenues of communication, understanding and cooperation. The author closes on a hopeful note. He believes that favorable attitudes toward Jews, Judaism and the State of Israel are on the increase among Christians and that anti-Semitism, that dark burden of the ages, is diminishing.

In their own way, Alice and Roy Eckardt have, for years, fought a valiant if lonely battle to arouse the Christian conscience to the fact that the text of the New Testament, particularly the Gospel of John, has been a persistent source of anti-Semitism culminating in the horrors of the Holocaust. They have, accordingly, maintained that a literalistic reading of the Christian Scriptures poses a threat to the survival of the humane values of love and justice among men.

In their paper, "The Achievements and Trials of Interfaith," they set forth their conviction that genuine interfaith activity is possible only within the context of non-absolutist religion, be it fundamentalism on the one hand or ultra-universalism on the other.

Particularly interesting is their discussion of contemporary "Christian Zionism." It should be noted that this attitude is cultivated far more in evangelical Christian circles than in liberal Protestantism today. Nevertheless, the Eckardts' searching analysis of long-term trends deserves serious consideration.

Some of the deeper issues in Christian-Jewish relations, often left unspoken, are articulated with vigor and warmth by Eliezer Berkovits, a distinguished Orthodox thinker and scholar. Because of the tragic heritage of hatred of Jews and Judaism that has long prevailed in the West, he concludes that interreligious dialogue is useless or worse. His paper, "Facing the Truth," is a challenge that cannot be ignored by those who would disagree with his conclusions.

A far more positive appraisal of the achievements of the inter-faith

movement is presented in "Jewish-Christian Relationships in America" by Solomon S. Bernards, who, from the experience of an active career in fostering mutual understanding between Christians and Jews, points to significant progress made in changing the climate of opinion in both religious communities.

That the interfaith movement has posed problems for some Christians, as well as for some Jews, is demonstrated in the warm and deeply personal paper entitled "An Evangelical and the Interfaith Movement" by William Sanford LaSor. As an evangelical Christian, he stresses the debt which his Biblically-centered Christian faith owes to Judaism and the degree to which interfaith activity has broadened his originally exclusivist position.

A warm defense of interfaith activity is presented by Martin E. Marty, one of the most distinguished spokesmen for American Protestantism. In a positive statement entitled "Interfaith at Fifty—It Has Worked!" he calls attention to the climate of group hostility in which it arose, and the contributions which the movement has made toward genuine understanding among religious groups. He then deals candidly with the disenchantment with the movement which has made itself felt in various quarters, both among Jews and among Christians, as a result of the tension-ridden years of the Yom Kippur War and its aftermath.

His thesis is that, precisely when the going is rough, the trip is worth making. When sources of possible friction and misunderstanding multiply, the interfaith movement can make its greatest contribution.

The Interfaith Movement

DAVID HYATT

IN 1934, IN A TOO-LITTLE-KNOWN BUT significant book entitled *All In the Name of God*, Dr. Everett R. Clinchy, the first president of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, wrote that

The historical approach to the question of intergroup relations is all-important. The present course of Protestant-Catholic-Jewish dealings is not intelligible unless we see the picture in its setting. Old ways of behaving hold people in their grip. For example, many Christians adopt as their own without examination ancient dislikes and anachronistic appraisals of Jews, even as many Jews fail to reconsider traditional opinions and medieval conceptions about Christians.

He went on to say that “It will be a manumitting experience to realize how archaic are the settings of many of our abhorrences and discriminations. *The American record, plainly stated, certainly should startle every reader as he sees how generation after generation has repeated monotonously the same old inhumanities in the same old way*” (italics mine.)

To put today’s interfaith movement in perspective, we should understand our roots. The early American colonies were made up of self-conscious, closed groups whose controlling policies were those of *exclusion*. They escaped religious tyranny and persecution only to establish their own religious tyrannies and very special systems of apartheid. The rights of outsiders were recognized unwillingly, *if at all*. The rare exceptions among the early colonial leaders were men like Roger Williams, Lord Baltimore and William Penn, who truly believed in religious freedom.

In 1630, in most of the colonies then in existence, citizenship was limited to conforming church members. Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch Protestant ruler of New York, had a particularly vicious attitude toward Jews, and, in the 18th century, Catholics and Jews in many states were still barred from the rights of citizenship. During the 1800s, there were countless documented incidents of the burning of Catholic convents and churches and of reigns of terror against Catholic groups, initiated by the Know-Nothing party. The persecution of the Jews was equally awful, but less publicly noted because their number was far less than that of the Catholics.

In the 1890s, the American Protective Association was as vicious in its

DAVID HYATT is president of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the lay president of the International Council of Christians and Jews.

attacks upon Catholics as was the Ku Klux Klan, later, in the 1920s, in brutal attacks upon Blacks and Jews and Catholics. Indeed, unbelievable though it seems, when the National Conference of Christians and Jews was founded, in 1928, the Klan had six million members. At that time, anti-Semitic restrictions in employment, in housing and in colleges and universities were standard practice, many married women were considered property by their spouses, and Blacks in both the North and the South were not only continually oppressed and degraded and sometimes treated worse than animals, but were frequently lynched!

My own personal memories as a teen-age Ohio farm boy in the late 20s dramatically illustrate the extent of prejudice in heartland America. I remember reading about "The Protocols of Zion" in *The Dearborn Independent*, an anti-Semitic newspaper that was mailed, free of charge, by Henry Ford, Sr. (who was a revered hero to many in the area) to all the farmers who had purchased his Model T and, later, his Model A Fords. I saw the Klan burn crosses in the cow pastures around the little town near our farm, and I heard them spew out hate against Blacks, Catholics and Jews even though there were no Blacks, only a handful of Catholics, and but one Jewish family in the neighborhood.

When the sexton (an old word for janitor) of the Congregational Church died, hooded klansmen occupied the three front pews at his funeral. When Jack Dempsey fought Gene Tunney, practically everyone I knew was for Dempsey because Tunney happened to be a Catholic. And when Alfred E. Smith ran for President in 1928, the pastor of that little Protestant church pounded the pulpit on the Sunday before Election Day and, in a thundering voice, warned: "If Al Smith is elected President, the Pope will be running the White House!"

Such was the mood of heartland America at that time. And it was this vicious wave of hysterical anti-Catholicism which was sweeping the country during the Presidential campaign that motivated Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, former Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, industrialist Roger Williams Straus, Methodist churchman Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, historian and Ambassador Carleton J. H. Hayes, and Rabbi Israel Goldstein to organize the National Conference of Christians and Jews—a fusion of Catholics, Protestants and Jews dedicated not only to combat anti-Catholicism, but any form of bigotry which sought to turn one group of Americans against another.

So what has changed in 50 years?

Catholics and Protestants are now killing each other in Northern Ireland, Hindus and Moslems continue to murder one another in Pakistan and India, thousands of Arabs remain committed to the proposition that Israel has no right to exist and await the day when they can drive their Jewish enemies into the sea, and, in South Africa and Rhodesia, the white elitist ruling minorities are courting genocide by their medieval practices

of oppression and government-sanctioned apartheid—a modern name for slavery.

Have we moved ahead at all in instituting and promulgating the Judeo-Christian dicta, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,” and “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” without regard to race, creed, color or ethnic origin—the great two-part Commandment of both the Old and New Testaments? The answer, despite the crimes against humanity that are still being committed all over the world and also, unfortunately, within the United States, is: *Yes*. Christians and Jews are today considerably closer to living by, and practicing, this most fundamental moral law of their faiths than they were half a century ago! And that has to be, at least in part, because of the interfaith movement of the past fifty years.

Today, millions of Americans are involved in this effort. A recent program audit of the work of the National Conference indicated that, *in a single day, its programs reached and involved nearly 900,000 people*, and the Conference is but one of many organizations working for ecumenism, interreligious understanding, and the living practice of the Judeo-Christian principles of interracial justice. The United States Catholic Bishops Conference has a Secretariat for Christian-Jewish Relations. So has the Vatican. Although often considered primarily as defense agencies, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League have important and far-reaching programs dealing with Christian-Jewish relations and, like the NCCJ, are as deeply concerned with racial justice as they are with interfaith harmony. The National Council of Churches has a department devoted to Christian-Jewish understanding. The American Zionist Federation has an Interreligious Commission involving many Christians. None of these departments and programs existed fifty years ago—indeed, a majority of these efforts came into existence only in the past two decades and some only within the past ten years.

In 1933, the five-year-old NCCJ had as its major program what was called “The Tolerance Trio.” Dr. Everett Clinchy, a Presbyterian minister, together with Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron and Father John Elliot Ross, embarked on a nationwide tour of 38 cities in 21 states in the interest of promoting understanding—at that time an unheard of idea. For the first time in their lives, more than 54,000 people at 129 meetings saw a rabbi, a priest and a minister speaking on the same platform together. It was a spectacular, indeed, astounding event—but it was also indicative of the depths of the *parochialism and of the lonely separation that afflicted not only the average church and synagogue attendant, but also the clergy of practically all religions and, indeed, their very top leadership*. The neighbor whom you were called upon to love in the great Judeo-Christian Commandment, if he or she was of another faith, or even another denomination within one of these faiths, was, instead, a total stranger.

The first trip, headed by Dr. Clinchy, covered 9,000 miles; in 1936,

25 different teams covered 38,000 miles. During World War II, trios reached 7,000,000 fighting men with the brotherhood camp show. Today, the familiar sight of priest, rabbi and minister together, while a significant symbol of unity in American life, is so commonplace that it is no longer news.

Three other programs of the 30s are noteworthy: 1) the founding of the Religious News service, 2) the inauguration of National Brotherhood Week, and 3) the development of national seminars on Religious Liberty and Mutual Understanding at Williamstown, Massachusetts.

The world's only interreligious news agency was begun in 1933 as an independently managed service within the NCCJ. Dr. Clinchy deserves great credit for listening to the idea of a dedicated former British journalist and editor, Louis Minsky, who was convinced that objective, truthful reporting of religious news could increase interreligious understanding and help eliminate prejudice. By 1945, the award-winning RNS began a daily photo service. On Minsky's death in 1954, Lillian Block took over as Managing Editor and has made the RNS an important factor in the increasing ecumenism that we are experiencing today, supplying more than 800 media outlets with foreign and domestic news, features, weekly radio scripts, and a television package.

Also during the early 30s, at the suggestion of a Catholic priest in Denver, Msgr. Hugh McMenamin, NCCJ launched a nationwide media and public awareness campaign called "Brotherhood Week." Although in certain portions of the deep South "Brotherhood Week" was an all-white interreligious celebration, these meetings, this "breaking of bread together," these "good-will" dialogues had the effect of at least defanging Protestant, Catholic and Jewish hostilities at the public level.

The programs emanating from Brotherhood Week were largely devoted to awakening people to the similarities of the ethical aims of various religious groups and the need to respect one another's differences—still an unrealized goal. But much of the Brotherhood Week "goodwill" and "tolerance" efforts were just that—one week during the year when Catholics, Protestants and Jews celebrated and broke bread together, with Blacks invited only occasionally to join in the celebration. As Dick Gregory used to lament, "If only some white folks would ask me to dinner when it wasn't Brotherhood Week!"

On the positive side, it has to be said that, were it not for Brotherhood Week, the parochial and separated individuals who comprise our major religious bodies (and among the most separated were the clergy themselves) would not have gotten together at all! Today, the NCCJ spends very little of its budget on Brotherhood Week programming, taking the stand that Brotherhood Week is 52 weeks of the year. Yet, like the 4th of July, Brotherhood Week is now permanently on the calendars and built into the programs of most of our public schools, service clubs, and other civic and community organizations.

The Williamstown Institutes were the third major program of NCCJ during the 30s. In 1935, 685 leaders of religion, business, education, and labor met at Williams College for a seminar billed as "An American Adventure in Promoting Understanding and Community Cooperation." Subsequent seminars in 1937 and 1941 drew even larger groups from our national leadership to discuss "Citizenship and Religion" and "The World We Want to Live In."

The growth and development of NCCJ tells, in part, the story of the whole interfaith movement. NCCJ's programs in the 30s were groundbreaking, pioneering and, although they dealt in generalities and emphasized goodwill more than specific problems, they were important steps toward building a more ecumenical nation and world. A comparison of its programs then and now is, in itself, an indication of how far we have come as a nation in interfaith communication and interreligious understanding.

The NCCJ, in its original bylaws, was given a mandate, amazingly enough, to attack the whole spectrum of intergroup prejudice. Article II under the heading "Purpose" stated that

... the Corporation exists to promote justice, amity, understanding and cooperation among Christians and Jews and *to analyze, moderate and strive to eliminate intergroup prejudices which disfigure and distort religious, business, social and political relations, with a view to maintaining at all times a society in which the religious ideals of brotherhood and justice shall become the standards of human relationship* (italics mine).

As a result, the NCCJ has now grown into a nationwide operation with 70 regional offices, more than 200 chapters, a staff of over 250 skilled human relations personnel, and an annual budget of \$6.6 million, almost all of it raised through corporate and individual support and with 87% of its total income invested directly into educational programs for better human relations and for human rights.

By contrast with its program of the 30s, NCCJ's program today is concerned with all of the major moral and spiritual problems dividing America—desegregation, quality integrated education, equal job and housing opportunities, affirmative job action, minority recruitment and promotion, women's rights, the religiously divisive issue of abortion, police-community relations and the administration of justice, the inequities of our criminal justice system in dealing with Blacks and other minorities, bio-medical ethics, youth leadership training in moral and spiritual values, the whole gamut of the various forms of the disease of anti-Semitism, Christian-Jewish relations as affected by the Middle East crisis, the false equating of Zionism with racism, the plight of Soviet Jewry, the meaning of the Holocaust in today's times, the teaching about the Holocaust in our children's classrooms, and the deep misunderstanding among many of my Christian brothers and sisters (I happen to be Catholic) about the profound meaning of Israel as a land, as a people and

as an essential part of the Jewish faith to the Jewish community throughout the world—with all of these programs having, as their ultimate goal, a single nation and a unified America.

The Christian silence, with some notable exceptions, regarding the Holocaust during the 30s is an unfortunate and abysmal blot on the record of the interfaith movement. So is the record of a number of Catholic Bishops and other Catholic clergy during the 1940s, 1950s and even into the 1960s, prior to Vatican II, who mistakenly believed that “interfaith” meant “a watering down” of their own faith and, therefore, refused to cooperate with NCCJ in its interreligious programming. While this made NCCJ operations quite difficult in some parts of the United States, the enlightened voices of such Jesuit philosophers as Father John Courtney Murray and Father Gustave Weigel, and the participation of many others of the Catholic persuasion, both laity and clergy, who believed the world “catholic” also meant “universal,” enabled NCCJ to program effectively during this period.

In 1960, when John F. Kennedy ran for president, many people, remembering the campaign of Alfred E. Smith, were positive that no Catholic could ever be elected to the highest office in the land. The anti-Catholic propaganda, while not as virulent or as voluminous as during the Al Smith campaign, was still sufficiently strong to move the NCCJ to launch a nationwide media campaign calling upon U.S. citizens to “vote for the best man, not because of his religion, but because he is most qualified through experience and knowledge to serve in the presidency.” The fact that Kennedy did win, albeit by a very small margin, certainly has to be chalked up as a victory for the interfaith movement. When Senator Edmund Muskie ran for president in 1968, the fact that he was Catholic was scarcely mentioned. Kennedy’s election would appear to have settled for good the issue of religion in a presidential campaign.

In 1960, substantially aided by a \$325,000 grant from the Ford Foundation, the NCCJ launched a nationwide ecumenical project, “Religious Freedom and Public Affairs,” to deal with all of the major issues dividing religious groups in this country. Rabbi Arthur Gilbert was its executive director.

It would be too great a task to enumerate the vast number of significant publications—books, pamphlets, essays, articles, bulletins, bibliographies—that NCCJ has put out and distributed as a part of this project, in addition to the many important national conferences that it sponsored. Books like *Homework for Christians*, by Dr. Bernhard Olson, and *Homework for Jews*, by Rabbi Gilbert, have received wide circulation and are still highly relevant. Dr. Olson conducted a research study of how Judaism is presented in Protestant Sunday School literature. His 1963 landmark book, *Faith and Prejudice*, drew wide acclaim while revealing some shocking facts. An inaccurate and un-Biblical portrayal of the Jews, in general, and of the Pharisees, in particular, was found to exist to some

degree in all of the literature studied. In an NCCJ publication ten years later, Dr. Gerald Strober surveyed what had happened to the Sunday School literature in these same groups, and though there had been great improvement, much more had yet to be done to erase anti-Semitism completely from Protestant Sunday School literature.

When Vatican II was initiated by Pope John XXIII, Father Weigel and Father Murray played important roles in preparing the ground-breaking documents which came out of the Council. Father Murray was the architect of the Declaration on Religious Liberty, whose theme was that "All individuals and groups have a right to be exempt from all manner of coercion in matters of faith, whether from society, government, or the Church itself." The declaration insisted that the major duty of any government is not to serve the particular interests of one faith or other faiths, but to protect the religious liberty of all.

Father Weigel's most significant contribution was in the development of the Decree of Ecumenism which recognized that the Holy Spirit is authentically at work in non-Catholic Christian Churches and encourages bonds of fraternal love between Catholics and other Christians.

There were two other statements of great significance to the interfaith movement. One is the Vatican Declaration on the Jews, which makes the point that,

Since Christians and Jews have such a common spiritual heritage, this sacred Council wishes to encourage and further mutual understanding and appreciation. This can be obtained, especially, by way of biblical and theological enquiry and through friendly discussions.

The statement stresses that "neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his (Christ's) passion." The document further says that the Church "deplores all hatreds, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism leveled at any time or from any source against the Jews."

The Vatican Council's statement regarding Relations with Other Non-Christian Religions was perhaps even more pioneering for the Roman Catholic Church. Referring specifically to Hinduism and Buddhism, the document says:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men . . .

The sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.

After Vatican II, interreligious programming increased greatly. A

majority of those of the Catholic clergy who had been hostile to NCCJ and the interfaith movement, turned full circle and dutifully emulated the example set by that great ecumenist, John XXIII, in embracing interfaith activities within their domain.

Another most significant event took place in the 60s. Many Jews were moved and many Protestants touched when, at the pleading of Dr. Jules Isaac, author of *The Teaching of Contempt and Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?* (which the NCCJ published in 1961), Pope John eliminated the references to the *perfidy Judaei* and *Judaica perfidia* in the Good Friday prayers, at the same time reinstating the *Flectamus Genua* for the Jews.

During the 1960s, the interfaith movement and the NCCJ also made giant steps forward in the work for interracial justice. The National Conference on Race and Religion was as important a standard in the racial field as Vatican II was for interreligious cooperation. The great marches on Selma and on Washington, led by Martin Luther King, Jr., united the great religions as never before in drives for racial justice.

Less spectacular but equally important in the struggle for interracial justice was NCCJ's mounting of a program, during the 60s, in more than 60 communities, for police officers and community leaders, on the problems of minority groups and the necessity for equal treatment of all Americans before the law. Similarly, its many summer week-long leadership camps for concerned youth and its national program, in the 70s, on behalf of quality integrated education (aided by \$300,000 in two grants from the Ford Foundation and over \$1,000,000 in U.S. Government HEW grants to NCCJ regional offices), made it possible for the NCCJ, working closely with many other interfaith agencies—as well as the NAACP and the Urban League—to play an important role in facilitating desegregation without violence or turmoil.

At the same time that these major thrusts in behalf of racial justice have increased, so have our interreligious efforts. There are four relatively new program thrusts which I think are highly significant:

1. *Development of Conferences on the Holocaust*

Dr. Franklin Littell, Chairman of the Department of Religion at Temple University and long-time consultant to NCCJ, working closely with Dr. Olson, launched NCCJ's first Annual Conference on the Church and the Holocaust, in 1974. Thanks to the vision and dedication of these two men, this program has taken on nationwide proportions. At least half a dozen conferences on the Holocaust are now held annually in different parts of the United States, and, during the past twelve months, at least 25 of NCCJ's regional offices have sponsored conferences exploring the Holocaust, how it happened, what actually happened and, most important of all, *what we must do to make sure that it never happens again!* A Holocaust survivor attending our four-day scholars' seminar in San Jose last year was moved to say, "This has changed my life. I know I'll never be

the same person again. Until now I did not believe there were Christians who cared."

2. *Development of Seminar-Tours on Christian-Jewish Relations in the Holyland and Related Statements in Behalf of Human Rights*

In the past three years, the NCCJ has sponsored for its leaders and staff six intercultural seminar tours on Christian-Jewish-Moslem relations in the Holyland. These projects have given the participants the opportunity to witness Arab-Israeli problems and Jewish-Christian-Moslem relations during an intensive 10-day study-dialogue in the Middle East, and have resulted in an increased understanding of those relations in the United States as they are affected by the Middle East situation.

Furthermore, on countless occasions in recent years, the NCCJ has spoken out strongly and clearly in behalf of Israel and her frequently-challenged rights: when the Yom Kippur War broke out, I issued a strong statement for the press on behalf of all NCCJ's constituency; and when, in November, 1975, the U.N. passed a resolution equating Zionism with racism there were condemnatory statements made by both the national organization and the regional directors and regional boards. On the problems of Soviet Jewry, the NCCJ has an Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry; regarding the tragic persecution of Soviet Jews the NCCJ has spoken decisively, and, to insure that there shall be no collaboration of silence, NCCJ offices in many parts of the country are now holding conferences focusing the spotlight upon these heinous violations of human rights.

3. *Inauguration of a Bio-Medical Ethics Program*

In the fall of 1975, the NCCJ, under the direction and leadership of Senior Vice President Donald McEvoy, began a new dialogue project, engaging physicians, lawyers and ethicists in discussions of the interreligious and intergroup implications of new developments in biomedical technology. The current public debate over abortion is only the tip of the iceberg of serious interreligious disputation which may confront us in the immediate future. More and more, people are facing ethical dilemmas for which they have no precedents or models in decision-making. We must weigh such values as the sanctity of life against the quality of life, the rights of society against the rights of the individual, or the ability to function as "normal" in society against the loss of individual character traits.

4. *NCCJ's Partnership with the International Council of Christians and Jews*

The National Conference is now an integral part of the International Council of Christians and Jews, a 14-nation body of similar groups in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain and Switzerland. Most of these national councils are primarily concerned with Christian-Jewish relations and, thanks to their highly competent lay leaders who do most of the work on a voluntary basis, they operate quite effectively on very modest

budgets. As early as 1948 an attempt was made formally to organize this international council, but it was necessary to overcome a variety of objections. Finally, in 1974, it did get established.

Among the important programs that the ICCJ has sponsored, all since its founding (and in which the NCCJ participated) have been: an international youth conference in Austria in 1975, co-sponsored by the *Aktion gegen den Antisemitismus* in Austria, and the ICCJ; the first international conference on the Holocaust to be held in Germany, in Hamburg, in 1976; an international conference in Jerusalem, in 1976, on "Israel: Its Significance and Its Realities," co-sponsored by the Israel Interfaith Committee and the ICCJ; an international conference for college youth on "Aspects of Violence and Terrorism," held in South Wales in December, 1976, with the co-sponsorship of the British Council and the ICCJ; an international conference on anti-Semitism and its eradication, at Southampton University in England, in 1977, co-sponsored by the British Council, the University of Fullerton (of the State U. of California), the University of Southampton and the ICCJ; an international conference, in May, 1978, in Vienna, on neo-Nazism, co-sponsored by the Austrian *Aktion gegen den Antisemitismus* and the ICCJ.

As I noted earlier, the growth, expansion and increasing concerns and responsibilities which the National Conference of Christians and Jews has taken on in the past few years are a good barometer of the state of interfaith relations in our nation today. We have, indeed, come a long, long way in 50 years. However, as Robert Frost put it so well, "But we have promises to keep/And miles to go before we sleep!"

The great Commandment to love God and, regardless of religion or race, to love our neighbors as ourselves, is still far from achievement.

Pioneering in America and in Israel

ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND THE STRIVING for interfaith comity in the United States began with the Founding Fathers of American history. Fifty is the age of its most constant and successful institutional carrier, the National Conference of Christians and Jews. In fact, the NCCJ was anteceded by other sporadic, similar attempts on the American scene. These deserve at least a passing retrospect.

The temper of the times in American life in the late 1920s called for such enterprises by men of goodwill. By 1927–28, it had become apparent to many religionists, educators and civic leaders throughout the United States, that unhealthy signs had appeared in “the home of the brave and the land of the free.” Noxious poisons, irreligious and undemocratic in essence, were coursing through the veins of the body politic, under the guise of defending religion and extolling democracy. Chief among these were:

- 1) the isolationist temper of the times, reflected in disinclination to join the League of Nations and coupled with an urge to withdraw into a shell of self-sufficiency;
- 2) a wave of bigotry from a revived Ku Klux Klan, relic of the post-Civil War years;
- 3) the swelling bitterness and hatred of anti-Catholic resistance to Al Smith as a Presidential candidate; and
- 4) the myopic-mindedness of the mid-1920s, mirrored so graphically in the Stokes “Evolution Trial” in rustic Tennessee.

The times called for counterforces which, in a constructive way, would repel the new paganism, the anti-intellectualism and the deification of the white race and of the oppressive state. Unbrotherliness and divisiveness had to be combatted in order to restore unity and comity to the common life.

Such was the nurturing soil out of which there emerged, in several forms, the interfaith movements which inspired Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, including socialists of various sorts, “humanists,” “world citizens,” *et al*, to combine their strengths and their resources so that sanity and probity might be brought back to society at large. These manifestations of the closing of ranks among Americans of all strata and persuasions, in an organized effort to ward off the evils of religious rivalries and enmities, the bane of cultural antagonisms and racial divisions, should be recalled in the retrospect of a half century later.

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Three interfaith organizations, the first two of more restricted scope and size, and a third, of considerable stature and influence, evolved from those formative years of the middle and late twenties. They were: 1) the Good Will Union; 2) the World Fellowship of Faiths; and 3) lastly, but more enduringly, the National Conference of Christians and Jews. A briefer description will be accorded the first and second, while the third, which has survived effectively through all these five decades and is today a potent force for good, will receive a more extended treatment.

Somewhere out of the dim recesses of the 1920s, there came to the surface in the life of New York City, an earnest, well-intentioned group known as America's Good Will Union. It was led by an idealistic Protestant minister, Rev. Dr. Edward L. Hunt, and was supported by a number of outstanding public figures, including Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, Judge Irving Lehman, Judge Jonah J. Goldstein, His Eminence Patrick Cardinal Hayes, and Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Charles Evans Hughes. The organization's purpose, as highlighted on its impressive letterhead, was stated simply: "To form a more perfect union by educating young and old in the Americanism which will strengthen the bonds of friendship and fellowship between all the inhabitants of our land."

Union Services, arranged by Rev. Hunt and graced by community leaders, were held on special occasions during the late 1920s and the early 1930s. Hunt was an enthusiastic Christian supporter of Zionism and a member of the newly organized Pro-Palestine Federation. On one occasion, at my synagogue, B'nai Jeshurun, in New York, at a Friday evening Thanksgiving Service which was focussed on the future of Palestine, he brought with him as the speaker, Bainbridge Colby, who had served as President Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State during the closing years of his Presidency. In his own preliminary remarks, Hunt adumbrated Colby's pro-Zionist address.

Due to ill health, Hunt was forced to retire in the mid-30s, but he and America's Good Will Union, which he organized and led, deserve to be remembered. Though it was short-lived, it broke fresh ground in the interfaith movement. It was a forerunner of the American Christian Palestine Committee which, a decade later, under the able and devoted direction of Rev. Dr. Karl Baehr and of Rev. Dr. Carl Hermann Voss, who was one of the founders and the first executive director, became a potent factor in winning American Christian public opinion for the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine.

Another pioneering visionary who deserves to be remembered in this context is the Hindu, Kedar Nath Das Gupta, a likeable, unpredictable, kindly, "head-in-the-clouds-and-feet-firmly-planted-in-midair" executive, who organized and administered his programs under the eponyms of "World Fellowship of Faiths" and "Union of East and West." He came into the orbit of my interests in 1926-27. On one occasion, he arranged a Rosh Hashanah greeting to the Jewish community in the Grace Episcopal

Church in New York, of which the distinguished Rev. Percy Stickney Grant was minister. It was my privilege to respond. The guests, even before they entered the Church, were welcomed by the organ peals of the traditional "*En Kelohenu*" synagogue melody, which resounded throughout the neighborhood. Das Gupta, together with Charles Frederick Weller, an equally passionate pacifist and world-minded organizer, were able to organize a letterhead which boasted as distinguished a collection of names as ever appeared on one piece of stationery. Sporadically, the organization came to life with praiseworthy declarations and interventions. A number of us in New York, including Stephen Wise, Francis J. McConnell, John Haynes Holmes and S. Parkes Cadman, gave it our blessing and support. In the spring of 1933, the Fellowship of Faiths issued a strong forthright condemnation of Hitler's pogroms. This declaration was read out by Dr. Wise at the American Jewish Congress protest meeting in Madison Square Garden.

The constant amidst the variables in the promotion of good interfaith relations on the American scene has been the National Conference of Christians and Jews, whose fiftieth anniversary is the occasion of this symposium. It is no small credit to an organization that the span of its activity is identified with the span of a movement of which it has been the main carrier. Although, as has been indicated, the NCCJ was not the first in the field of interfaith activity on the American scene, it has proved to be the best equipped, the most prominent, the most enduring and the most successful.

Several criteria suggest themselves as proper measuring rods for assessing the worthiness of an interfaith movement in the American community. They are: 1) the achievement of the confidence of the minority groups in the authentic goodwill of the majority; 2) the cooperation of all the groups in improving the tone of community and national life; 3) the united enlistment of all of the national forces in support of a better world order.

As one of its all too few living founders, who had had an ongoing active relationship with the National Conference of Christians and Jews for the greater part of its half century, the writer holds the view that the NCCJ, on the whole, has met the test creditably. It has made a significant contribution to the integrality of the American community. It has also encouraged similar associations in other countries, beginning with the British Council of Christians and Jews, and was helpful to the latter in convoking, in 1946, the conference at Oxford which initiated the International Conference of Christians and Jews.

One misgiving felt by several of the Jewish leaders, which had to be cleared up as a condition precedent to their participation in the founding of the NCCJ, was the question of proselytizing. Some of us were apprehensive of the motivations of one or two of the Protestant leaders involved, who were known for their missionary zeal. We made our views

known. The misgiving was laid to rest and has never arisen since in the NCCJ. It is worth recalling this point in connection with recent revivals of Christian missionary approaches to Jews on the American scene and elsewhere, such as the "Jews for Jesus" campaigns. Their purported espousals of an interest in Jewish problems can never be taken at face value.

The record of the NCCJ on the Nazi blight has been, on the whole, creditable. In the spring of 1933, when our hearts were heavy with apprehension over the emergence of Hitler and the Nazi menace in Europe, which threatened not only Jews but civilization, the NCCJ lost no time in warning against it. It sprang to the defense of German Jewry with a strong statement drafted by the foremost Protestant churchman in America, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and signed by 1200 Christian clergy. Its telling sentence was, "It is our considered judgment that the endeavor of the German Nazis to humiliate a whole section of the human family, threatens the civilized world with the return of medieval barbarity."

No one anticipated, then, the full measure of Nazi bestiality which came to curse the ensuing years. Ten years later, when civilization was in the throes of an embattled struggle against Hitler and his allies, and reports about the Holocaust of the Jews began to seep through *Festung Europa*, the then administrative head of NCCJ was not as responsive as the situation demanded to the proposal for the issuance of a strong statement urging upon governments a more liberal policy in providing havens for refugees and criticising the British government for adhering to its White Paper policy in violation of its mandate. Even if such a statement had been of no avail, its very issuance would have been an act of brotherliness.

Among the most praiseworthy undertakings of the NCCJ was the wartime enlistment of leading clergy, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish, to form interfaith teams for visiting U.S. army camps and naval bases throughout the land. This was a rare opportunity to reach ready-made audiences with interfaith messages and to relate them to America's war aims. The appearance of a priest, a minister and a rabbi, together on the same platform, was in itself a new experience for tens of thousands of young men who came from areas where ecumenical demonstrations were unknown and where prejudices thrived on ignorance. It may be assumed that the wholesome effects of these demonstrations remained with many.

It has been a moot question whether an interfaith movement should also have concerned itself with inter-racial problems. In the writer's view, an interfaith program aiming to carry out the aspiration voiced in the closing prayer of the Synagogue Service, "to improve the world under the kingdom of God," cannot afford not to involve itself in America's number one social problem, the equality of the Black race, both in law and in fact. The NCCJ, however, has chosen to limit its program to the area described in its title—relations between Christians and Jews.

Another source on which, in the writer's view, the NCCJ fell short of

its optimum credentials, in the earlier part of its career, was in relation to the Jewish aspiration for a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine. In 1943, this aim was formulated by the American Jewish Conference, as the body representing the overwhelming preponderance of American Jewry. Yet, the NCCJ steered clear of this issue, motivated, no doubt, by its reluctance to antagonize any part of its Jewish constituency. Yet, to the majority of American Jewry, this was a regrettable omission. So *Medinat Yisrael* came into being without the help of the NCCJ.

With the coming of Dr. David Hyatt into the top leadership, the stance of the NCCJ on Zionism, the importance and significance of *Medinat Yisrael* and the need of keeping alive the memory of the Holocaust, has become more friendly, more affirmative and more forthcoming. At the same time, the general tone of its stance on the race question has become stronger and more solicitous.

The main area of the NCCJ program, Christian-Jewish relations, has been greatly enhanced and expedited by the historic declaration of Vatican II, initiated by the unforgettable Pope John XXIII. In the Protestant area, too, more liberal zephyrs have been emanating from the international headquarters in Geneva.

In sum, the NCCJ has been, on the whole, a constructive force for interfaith comity on the American scene, for the improvement of the tone of the communities and of the nation, and for projecting the vision of a better integrated social order. It has served as a useful instrument for educating Americans, individuals as well as communities, to a fuller appreciation of the contribution which every religious grouping makes to the American syndrome, and to the common responsibilities which unite them.

Not unrelated to these developments, has been the interfaith movement in *Medinat Yisrael* itself. Traditionally, the relations between the various religious sects and denominations in this tiny, history-laden land have been in inverse proportion to their physical contiguity. With the establishment of Israel thirty years ago, and the eminently fair attitude of its Ministry of Religions toward all of the religious minorities—Christian, Moslem and Druse—there has developed an interfaith dialogue, albeit on a small scale. It is sponsored mainly by the Rainbow Club, a select discussion group of academicians and theologians, established fifteen years ago. On a broader scale, and operating also in the field of social action, though limited by its slender resources, is the Israel Interfaith Committee, organized earlier. It has become reactivated in recent years and has made its presence felt within Israel itself and beyond its borders. Two years ago, it was host, in Jerusalem, to the observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Conference of Christians and Jews. Another important conference which it sponsored, on “The Bible and Black Africa,” brought to Jerusalem many leading churchmen from the African continent.

Israel, the alma mater of three great world religions, should, indeed,

become the principal “locus” of inter-religious dialogues. The history of three great world religions provides its moral credentials. Its extraordinary “acoustics” and “visibility” might be regarded as additional current qualifications for that role.

The record in Israel thus far, however, points up the difficulties more than the achievements. Interfaith tensions have long roots in Israel. In addition, the political strain between Jews and Arabs is a deterrent to ongoing religious dialogue, though the hope is that this strain will ease as peaceful relations develop. And within the Jewish group, itself, there are sharp cleavages between Orthodox and non-Orthodox segments. Though all of these circumstances constitute extra internal challenges to be overcome, there are more than a few pioneering, valiant, dedicated ecumenicists who carry the flag with undeterred moral determination and with intellectual vigor of uncommon quality.

The tonic effect of the birth of *Medinat Yisrael* on Jewish-Christian relations abroad, already visible, is yet to unfold its full potential. The light of Zion has put Jews everywhere in a better light. By the same token, an extra responsibility rests upon Israel's leaders in government and in all departments of its national life, to be aware of their domestic and extra-territorial moral responsibilities toward the image of the Jew, as reflected from the Jewish National Home.

As the National Conference of Christians and Jews, in the United States, enters upon the second half of its first century, the question naturally arises, “If it did not exist, would it be necessary to create it today?” In other words, “What is its rationale from here on?”

The answer lies in the recognition of a basic fact, which is the rationale for retaining, renewing and reinvigorating every agency for human betterment, namely, the limitations of human nature. The checkered experience of the social order teaches us that there is no built-in guarantee that human gains, once made, remain immune to corrosion. They are ever in need of being nurtured over and over again. Human progress, individual and social, if left to inertia, is ever in danger of losing its gains. Progress itself needs to be propelled forward by ever-renewed will and effort since, in this area, momentum encounters ever-renewed resistance.

Hence, it is the part of wise social engineering to strengthen, renew, reinvigorate, reconsecrate and advance those institutions which have secured and forwarded the interests of unity across diversities, and have kept enkindled the light of brotherhood, fellowship and peace.

Up From Isolation—Intergroup Activities at the Seminary

JESSICA FEINGOLD

A Program Develops

In the long history of monotheism, let alone of mankind, the span of one human generation is minute; yet, looking back to 1937, it is difficult to remember the lack of communication as we now know it. On the mechanical level, transistors, miniaturization, radiotelephones, teletype, xerox, television, satellites were still either unknown or laboratory experiments. And even where new technology was not required for communication, even in New York City where transportation was readily available, there was little or no exchange between religious or intellectual groups. It is difficult to realize that, in 1937, Catholic priests in our city were forbidden to enter a Protestant religious institution and that Protestants were seldom (if ever) invited by Catholics. Nor was there communication between rabbis and other clergy. Leading academicians and other intellectuals, normally limited to white males, seldom met outside of their specialties. In Europe, at the same period, leading minds were aiding totalitarian ideologies.

Recognizing the overwhelming need for political and humanitarian efforts to thwart the dictatorships, one Jewish theological institution of higher learning understood the tremendous national and international efforts which would be necessary. Yet, it also saw that intellectual and religious resources could play an important role in the world struggle. The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, through its own particular attributes, sought to offset the worldwide danger, using religious scholarship to strengthen American democracy. Study together might well lead to mutual understanding and cooperation, especially as the ministers came to realize that they had much in common, without thought of interference in anyone's religion. Thinkers and opinion-makers, if brought together with their peers in varied fields, could clarify underlying ethical and moral issues. As a non-proselytizing minority, Jewish theologians could be a link between followers of other traditions and leaders in other fields.

There was no pattern to emulate or adapt. The beginnings of this radical experiment evolved slowly during several years of consultation with Christian and Jewish authorities, who provided encouragement. Archbishop (later Cardinal) Francis Spellman approved invitations to

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Catholic priests, because the aim was purely study. Location was, itself, a problem, for perhaps a neutral place would be more attractive to the general clergy. The final decision—to use the Seminary's own buildings—was based on its reputation for devotion to religious learning, on the quality of its faculty, and on the high calibre of its library. Rapidly, the decision was proved correct. The Jewish Theological Seminary offered a congenial setting where study with others of different culture, denomination, discipline, or race was not only stimulating, but, also strengthened the individual in his or her own work.

The program for clergy, The Institute for Interdenominational Studies, begun modestly, in 1938, with four lectures by Christian and Jewish scholars, was later to be expanded to 39 meetings each season. Soon, interest in common goals was replaced by that in differences, and, with the addition to the executive committee of The Reverend F. Ernest Johnson and Dr. Robert Morrison MacIver, both of them from Columbia University, the project became The Institute for Religious and Social Studies, broadened and deepened to consider many problems of society, but always in the context of values and religion. Subjects ranged from a comparison of the thought of Akiba and Augustine, to group relations and civil rights, liturgy and religious music (its improvement being a special concern of The Reverend Father John LaFarge, S.J., who early became a central Institute figure), other contemporary art forms, symbolism, education, the media, the communication of ideas, leisure, poverty, social welfare, youth and urban sprawl. Moreover, the Institute achieved a reputation for focusing on vital issues before they emerged as urgent general concerns.

Wider audiences were reached through the congregations, schools, broadcasts, and writings of the ministers—more attending every year—and the publication of the lectures in 29 volumes that have been purchased by public and university libraries literally around the world. Evening lectures by such personalities as Pearl Buck, Arthur H. Compton, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Nelson Glueck, Hu Shih, Julian Huxley, Jacques Maritain, Elbert D. Thomas, and Frank Lloyd Wright attracted large, distinguished audiences.

After consultation and experiment, Tuesday mid-day was found to be the most convenient period for practicing clergy to attend the Institute and, soon, that day was blocked off as "Institute day" on the calendars of religious organizations. On Tuesdays, two lecture and discussion periods were followed by a luncheon and third lecture. There was clearly great significance in the breaking of bread together and the opportunity for informal conversation with other registrants who were to be met nowhere else. Christians showed great interest in Jewish observance and the Jewish community, an unplanned and unexpected offshoot of the program. Rabbinic scholars were confronted with ritual questions, such as that of the blessings at meals. After experimenting with cake instead of bread,

and with the rotation of spoken grace among denominations, the practice emerged of a moment of silence in which each could pray according to personal tradition. This practice has been adopted elsewhere for many years, on many occasions, in many places.

Thirty years ago, at the demand of Protestant seminarians from across Broadway who could not attend these series because of regular courses, a special evening seminar became part of the general program, ultimately including young persons from Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish and Protestant institutions. Again, after many changes in technique, the students now plan their programs with the aid of a faculty adviser from each group with whom they meet several times before an evening session at The Jewish Theological Seminary. Theological questions are studied in depth, with basic texts from Scripture and other religious sources. Numbers of the students later participate in post-graduate portions of the Institute. Other relationships which developed in the student seminar have led to varied cooperative actions, such as the 24-hour prayer vigil at the Lincoln Memorial on behalf of the Civil Rights Bill—a demonstration in which close to 300 seminaries across the country participated, students coming by bus at their own expense, sleeping in churches, and eating kosher food provided by Jewish sisterhoods. Inter-seminary student committees arose, adopting different activities from time to time, but always keeping alive genuine communication among the seminaries' student bodies.

The Institute was under pressure to create similar opportunities for clergy elsewhere, particularly in Chicago and Boston. Therefore, despite its small means, pilot projects were undertaken in both cities, each for a limited period.

In 1944, with the cooperation of the University of Chicago, series were begun that were led by a prominent Catholic, Jerome G. Kerwin, a professor of political science. The Archbishop welcomed the effort, priests and nuns being in attendance, 34 years ago. In 1945, a similar program was held by the Institute in Boston—also on the Chicago and New York Tuesdays—with the cooperation of the Academy of Arts and Sciences. Archbishop (later Cardinal) Richard J. Cushing opened the first meeting and spoke at others. The quality of the material and the attendance at both branches proved the value of the Institute concept. But, after 1953, it seemed advisable to concentrate energies in New York on intensified research, an enlarged program there and on an expanded publication list, so the temporary experiments were ended.

In New York, in 1953, faculty seminars meeting monthly and composed of men and women from many schools were added to the Institute. Lyman Bryson was chairman of one group until his fatal illness. He was succeeded by Thomas K. Finletter and then by Leo Rosten. Some of the discussions centered about aspects of responsibility, and about emerging concepts of man and society. A different seminar, its leaders including

Father LaFarge, sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, and Paul J. Tillich, considered art and religion.

In 1960, a somewhat younger group, whose members cut across many denominations and disciplines, formed still another monthly seminar, again studying public and private conduct and the basic meaning of responsibility. At first, papers were prepared in advance. Subsequent experiments in technique led to discussions based on a question, or questions, circulated beforehand, to the enlistment of a specialist who would be available for expert material when necessary, to preliminary briefing of that specialist and prior distribution of his biography, along with his reaction to the given question. During one season, the draft of a member's paper was submitted for cross-disciplinary comment by the group, so that the original text, in revised form, could benefit from the diversified knowledge and experience of the seminar and achieve much greater value.

In 1968, with the aid of Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, S.J., of Fordham University, and C. Eric Lincoln, a Black scholar, expert in sociology and religion at Union Theological Seminary, an on-going group was organized to explore ways in which civilization might be enhanced in New York City. That group conducted its sessions in various ways, even commissioning an interview-study of squatters as a basis for the consideration of value-clash in our pluralistic society.

Pursuing the second idea which led to the Seminary's department of Intergroup Activities, that of breaking through the over-compartmentalization of learning, and simultaneously with the founding of the Institute in 1938, ten eminent philosophers, scientists, and theologians issued a call which led 86 well-known academicians to gather in a Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion. The first meeting, held in the Seminary's quadrangle in 1940, was attended by delegates from 145 other institutions from all parts of our country. W. F. Albright, Albert Einstein, and Jacques Maritain, were among those who contributed papers. The Conference continued its meetings, at first annually, then occasionally at longer intervals, allowing several years for preparation. Administered through the Institute, the Conference accepted invitations to hold sessions at the American Philosophical Society, Columbia, Harvard, Loyola in Chicago, and the University of Chicago, as well as at The Jewish Theological Seminary itself.

There were numerous refinements in technique, some imitated later. Papers were circulated in advance, sometimes having been prepared by groups or in seminars lasting several years. Written comment on them was solicited for distribution and reply, the actual sessions being reserved for discussion. Papers and proceedings were issued in 18 volumes, which, like those of the Institute, are on standing order from Moscow to Canberra, Tokyo to Oxbridge, and between. Some of the material has been translated into Hebrew and Japanese, as well as into European languages. The

importance of the set, like that from the Institute, is shown by sales, the commercial reprinting in hard cover of any title which goes out of print, its frequent use as textbooks, and the many requests for reprints. One volume was quoted by the United States Supreme Court in its 1954 anti-segregation decision, for reasons to alter "separate-but-equal." Another was influential in the formation of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Two have been described at Harvard as the first genuine studies of symbolism since Aristotle.

The development of the study program for clergy, the seminars, and the Conference came only after thorough discussion, sometimes involving half a dozen persons, sometimes a larger group, sometimes over a few hours, a half day, a country weekend. No one was invited as a representative, but diversity continually grew. For example, by 1940 Blacks and women were involved and, shortly afterward, Islamic scholarship introduced additional insights.

To add ideas and experience from government officials, jurists, businessmen, and others in "affairs," The Institute on Ethics came into being, drawing on the background and membership of the other Seminary Intergroup Activities. In 1956, for example, six weeks, three in the country and three at the Seminary, were spent on contemporary problems of ethics and the equality of opportunity. The group included selected graduate students (one became a Nobel Prize winner in physics). In 1958, another group, including Hindu and Islamic scholars, again met at Lake Mohonk to consider the ethics of the population explosion, of radiation, and the manipulation of human personality. Interest in the first topic was so great that the other items on the agenda were postponed. Two participants, a Jesuit (subsequently the head of the Catholic Family Institute) and a Protestant biologist, whose laboratory had just produced the birth control pill, agreed that it was the first time that each began to respect the other's position and to realize that each had ethical and moral grounds for it.

The minority position of the Biblical tradition in the world led to the realization that it would be advisable to include knowledge from other traditions in sessions of the Conference and Institute. Accordingly, such themes entered their programs, and participants included representatives from Africa and Asia. In 1952, Hajime Nakamura and Daisetz T. Suzuki of Tokyo University were involved in the work. In 1958, N.A. Nikam, the Indian philosopher, became a member. In 1959, the Chancellor of Mysore and Karnatak Universities, the Maharaja of Mysore, presented a paper on "The Concept of Power in Indian Philosophic Thought." Other sessions were attended by the Dean and two sheiks—associate deans—of the Islamic Theological Seminary of Teheran. One experiment in trans-cultural study of values, of tradition and change in the contemporary world, brought to the Institute foreign graduate stu-

dents from Buddhist, Hindu, Ibo, Islamic, and other backgrounds to participate with Americans in a two-year seminar-workshop.

The Asia Society, Columbia University, The Rockefeller Foundation, Union Theological Seminary and other institutions with connections abroad aided in the selection of the members who specialized in education, history, international affairs, law, medicine, physics and theology—a partial list indicative of the range. Each season, the members became acquainted at a country weekend, attended also by several experts to supply discussion material, always in terms of values. Part of the seminar effort was experiments in techniques, which always affect content. For example, Vietnam was the subject for exploration with West Point faculty members (in mufti and off the Point in deference to the pacifist Buddhist monk). A similar weekend closed each Ethics Institute session with a program arranged by the students, and specific themes, such as abortion, the family, individual rights, the United States race relations (with Black and Indian participants) were high on the agenda. Field trips demonstrated bits of American history, like the 17th century Huguenot houses at New Paltz, the Roosevelt Library and home at Hyde Park or the I.B.M. computer center at Yorktown Heights. Members also took advantage of the opportunity to attend Sunday services at any one of several small country churches.

Many of those who were student participants are now prominent in different fields in our country, Africa, Asia, and South America. Recently, the *New York Times* published a valuable letter on peace in the Near East by one of the seminar members, an orthodox Muslim and atomic scientist, who frequently visits The Jewish Theological Seminary and annually makes a three-hour trip to its *sukkah*. The pacifist Buddhist monk became chief of religious education for young persons in South Vietnam and, after the war, was flown to safety by our government. Once in the Mid-western relocation camp he asked a visiting Jewish chaplain for the Institute's address, the greatest loss in his abandoned papers. Friendship with these former students added immeasurably to the value of an exploratory visit to the Far East and Middle East in 1969–1970, where, perhaps for the first time, an American group sought advice from many foreign thinkers—in the arts, city planning, education, government, jurisprudence, journalism, philosophy, religion, and science—about the content, personnel, and format of a series of international discussions of ethics. Conversations with some 200 personages, including the Dalai Lama, the Catholic Bishop of Kandy in Sri Lanka, the Hindu Maharaja of Mysore, the chief Islamic scholar in Delhi, other Islamic scholars in Iran, have all indicated concern for one theme: how to use the accumulated wisdom of the human race to cope with contemporary ethical, moral and religious problems, and how to convey understanding to youth. There has been great fascination with the Jewish record of case studies and reinterpretation.

Unfortunately, plans for such an expansion of the Intergroup Activities were suspended with financial changes in the spring of 1970. Budget restrictions also resulted in a rethinking of the program for The Institute for Religious and Social Studies. Consultation with clergy and other leaders—men and women of differing creed, culture, denomination, and race—led to an experiment with a seminar, for some 200 clergy, which has run successfully for six seasons. The remainder of the budget goes to the continuation of the program for theological students, and to a seminar which employs the same material for study by different groups, drawn from business, church, government, synagogue, and university, on conflicting urban values and their accommodation in a pluralistic society.

Some Indications of Results—(omitting numerous off-the-record events)

The evaluation of a non-degree adult education program, especially in a brief account, is almost impossible. Yet, a set of facts regarding the Seminary's Intergroup Activities, listed in no particular order, may speak for itself:

— The activities have continued uninterruptedly for 40 years, with ever-increasing attendance. Participants have numbered 75,000 or more opinion-makers, about 3% Jewish (from all branches), 20% Catholic, and the remainder from some 20 Protestant denominations. Lecturers and chairmen (persons already eminent or others who have become so) number close to 25,000, many returning gladly when invited, all writing their appreciation of the opportunity to work with a unique group.

— Regardless of eminence or pressure of work, anyone ever sought by the Institute or Conference for advice regarding program content, participants, audience-building, or anything else, has generously given of his or her time and experience. Anyone asked to speak has accepted, except in cases of unavoidable schedule conflict.

— Invitations for the clergy sessions go to every clergyman in the New York metropolitan area. Acceptance is, of course, self-selected. Over the years, despite the delicacy of many discussions, no hostility has been shown in tone or word. Mailing lists from all denominations are regularly sent to the Institute for comparison with its own for invitations. This is a unique proof of support for, and faith in, the aims of the Institute. Denominational leaders promote Institute attendance at their own meetings and by distribution of the announcements in their own mailings, at their own expense, despite shrinking resources.

— Discussions at the postgraduate series have produced an agenda of some 50 items for consideration by a rabbi newly entering on his congregational work.

— The career class of the United States Army Chaplain School at Fort Hamilton regularly attended the Institute for many years until the Army closed that school. For its chaplains, the United States Navy has

commissioned from the Institute more than 1,000 cassettes of material by a Catholic scholar, and is now asking for similar use of the 1977-1978 presentations.

— "Thesis," the theological cassette-of-the-month club, produced by Protestant clergy, regularly seeks Institute materials.

— Lecturers and registrants who have moved from the New York area continue to correspond with the Institute. A number—both Christian and Jewish—have asked for help in their new environments. Letters from near and far testify that the writers, through the Intergroup Activities, have built bridges to other persons who have proved most helpful and who, otherwise, would have been outside their acquaintance.

— One Black minister, the longtime leader of a large suburban congregation, has said that the clergy is now faced with more and more serious problems affecting all denominations and that the only place where they can be studied constructively is at The Jewish Theological Seminary.

— Requests come from all over the country for the establishment of schools similar to the Seminary's department of Intergroup Activities.

— A seminarian, given a sum for philanthropic and religious distribution in honor of his ordination at St. Patrick's Cathedral, sent a contribution to the Institute. Several Protestant postgraduate Fellows have left bequests to it. One Black, from a small struggling congregation, has underwritten an attendance certificate, signed by the Chancellor of The Jewish Theological Seminary, as requested by the group.

— Press services send many articles from local papers, which, in their references to changes of pulpit, honors, or obituaries regarding ministers from their neighborhood, also mention attendance at the Institute and, especially, that it is part of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

— The department of Intergroup Activities has helped The Jewish Theological Seminary work more and more closely with neighbors such as Riverside Church. Both Dr. Fosdick and The Reverend Dr. Robert J. McCracken, who succeeded him as Preaching Minister, served as chairman of the Institute executive committee. At the Cathedral School of the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, Judaism is now taught regularly by a Seminary rabbi. Before its dissolution, Catholic Woodstock College was officially on the verge of cross-registration with The Jewish Theological Seminary, and that mutuality has been achieved with Protestant Union Theological Seminary.

— At the installation of Monsignor Myles M. Bourke as Rector of nearby Corpus Christi Church, he made special mention in his inaugural sermon of all the ways that he and his colleagues had benefited from The Jewish Theological Seminary and, particularly, its Intergroup Activities, and stated that it was one reason for his satisfaction at coming to Morningside Heights. That also had been officially given as one reason for the move of Woodstock College from rural Maryland to the same area.

— The phrase, “Judeo-Christian,” was used at the Institute soon after 1937 and has become normative all over. This marks a significant change in the relationship of the two traditions, and in the status of Judaism itself.

— In April, 1963, the Italian television network requested Rabbi Louis Finkelstein, then Chancellor of the Seminary, to comment on the Encyclical “*Pacem in Terris*,” of Pope John XXIII. Shortly afterward, Rabbi Finkelstein was asked to televize an obituary for the Pope. In June, 1963, President John F. Kennedy, in an unprecedented action, appointed him as his representative at the installation of Pope Paul VI. The American priest who was the receptionist for Rabbi Finkelstein told him that his words about the late Pope John had made him especially welcome to the new Pope.

Rabbi Finkelstein would be the first to state that the Seminary’s Intergroup Activities depend on the generous cooperation, over many years, of many, many thoughtful men and women in all walks of life. Yet his were the original ideas, the organization, and the implementation. Few would quarrel with Cardinal Spellman who, in awarding to Rabbi Finkelstein an honorary degree at Manhattan College in 1965, described him as “the father of ecumenism.”

While the ongoing program will doubtless meet new situations and reflect new ideas under the leadership of Chancellor Gerson D. Cohen, it can be said that the Intergroup Activities have moved toward the goals which, after consultation with leaders in many traditions, were officially set forty years ago:

Mindful of a basic obligation to increase the understanding of Judaism among adherents of other traditions, as well as the Jew’s comprehension of his own religion, the Seminary conducts intergroup activities which also exemplify another special role of a minority religion in the Western World: the linking together of followers of other traditions.

[T]he Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion is an effort to face the crisis in our culture by an experiment in corporate thinking. . . . [T]hese scholars, whether scientists, philosophers, or theologians, are increasingly conscious of their collective responsibility for some measure of common leadership in American life and thought. . . . [T]he Conference has two reasons for being, to build more secure foundations for democracy and to explore the possibilities of collaboration between the various disciplines it represents. . . . America was the first nation to apply the principle of federalism to a land of continental dimensions; and we feel that the American genius may well apply this principle in the intellectual and ethical world as well. . . . It is our opinion that such a Conference would have a contribution to make to an appreciation of the meaning of life and culture, and to the foundation of true civilization.

The achievement of the Intergroup Activities program, emanating from what might seem an ivory tower, can be correctly described as a clear, shining window on the world, continually used from without and from within The Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

A Tale of One City

ALFRED WOLF

A COMMITTEE REPRESENTING THE NATIONAL Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches and the Synagogue Council of America selected Los Angeles as the site for the Fourth National Workshop on Christian-Jewish Relations, to be held in November, 1978. A major reason for the choice was that some of the new aspects in interreligious life can be seen clearly in this community.

Even though we are considering "Interfaith at Fifty," the years since World War II and particularly the 1960s and 70s are of prime concern. Change and progress in interreligious affairs during these years can be traced clearly in national and international Christian documents;¹ but, ultimately, the value of any of these documents depends on their implementation on the local level. Los Angeles houses not only the second largest Jewish population in the United States and one of the largest and most dynamic Catholic Archdioceses, but, also, large and articulate Buddhist, Hindu, Moslem and Sikh communities and, for this reason, the story of interreligious life there offers significant insights. In many respects, of course, Jews, Protestants and Catholics in Los Angeles do exactly what they do elsewhere, but, because it is active and multifaceted, this city serves as a most appropriate proving ground for theories articulated in the published documents and as a testing ground for models not yet considered in the national and international dialogues.

New developments in interreligious activities include (1) a basic change in Catholic-Jewish relations; (2) the outreach to non-Judeo-Christian world religions; (3) the challenge of the new Jewish Agenda: Holocaust, Israel, Soviet Jewry; and (4) the confrontation of the problem of Christian proselytism. Special attention is here given to Catholic-Jewish relations, not because they are more important but because they represent a relatively recent development.

Catholic-Jewish Relations

It is important to differentiate between Catholic-Jewish and

1. From the report of the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1948) to the most recent draft statement of its Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People (1977); from the Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate* (1965) to the Venice statement of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews (1977); from the U.S. Bishops' Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations (1967) to the new National Catechetical Directory (1977).

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Protestant-Jewish relations since the dynamics of dialogue differ between the two groups and, in Protestantism, even from denomination to denomination. To be sure, Protestants and Catholics are Christians, but Catholics and Jews also share significant characteristics: both are religious minorities in this country; both have been objects of discrimination; both have their major following among the immigrant groups of the nation's second century. In the Southern Bible Belt, it is not uncommon to hear people talk of "Christians, Catholics and Jews" and some don't even know the difference between the latter two categories. The same point is illustrated by the National Conference of Christians and Jews which reflects this reality in all but its name; its national and local chairmanships are shared and rotated among Protestants, Catholics and Jews. Ironically, the event which triggered the birth of the organization was not an incident of Christian-Jewish hostility, but the wave of anti-Catholicism in the wake of Al Smith's bid for the presidency in 1928.

Common interests and shared goals for Catholics and Jews might have been discovered long ago had it not been for the self-imposed isolation of the Church. Because of it, Protestant-Jewish relations were the first to develop. Scholars like Conrad Moehlmann² and James Parkes³, and preachers like John Haynes Holmes⁴ pointed out both Christianity's dependency on Judaism and the Christian roots of anti-Semitism. Organized Protestantism has long recognized the need for contacts with the Jewish community. The National Conference of Christians and Jews actually developed from a "Committee on Goodwill between Christians and Jews" of what was then the Federal Council—now the National Council—of Churches. In the documents of its founding assembly in Amsterdam, 1948, the World Council of Churches included a condemnation of anti-Semitism. While internal denominational problems and relations with the so-called Third World currently rate higher priorities on the Protestant agenda, both organizations continue to maintain offices on Christian-Jewish Relations.

The drama of Catholic-Jewish relations springs from the very fact that they were practically non-existent before Vatican II. There were, of course, personal friendships between Catholic prelates and Jewish leaders, but, still, Catholic clergy did not participate in interfaith events, and Catholic lay people were discouraged from entering synagogues or Protestant churches.

2. Conrad H. Moehlmann, *The Christian-Jewish Tragedy—A Study in Religious Prejudice* (Rochester, New York, 1933). Long before the Holocaust, Dr. Moehlmann anticipated the insights of Jules Isaac and other post-World War II writers.

3. James Parkes, now an octogenarian, has been the most consistent, continuous voice for Christian-Jewish understanding, beginning with his *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism* (London: Soncino Press, 1934).

4. Rev. John Haynes Holmes, Minister of New York's Community Church, 1907–1949, gave a lecture on "Christianity's Debt to Judaism" which was widely circulated in the 1930s and 40s.

Vatican II brought a radical change. *Nostra Aetate* was followed by the 1975 Guidelines which encouraged dialogue on the basis of self-definition and by the 1977 Venice statement eschewing proselytism.

In the United States, the Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops announced the establishment of a committee for Catholic-Jewish Relations, recommended the formation of diocesan commissions or secretariats for Catholic-Jewish affairs, warned against proselytizing and recommended programs which would further a better understanding by Catholics of Jews and Judaism.⁵

In November, 1975, on the tenth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the National Conference of Bishops again issued a statement reviewing developments in Catholic-Jewish affairs,⁶ urging, "... all in the Church who work in the area of education . . . to emphasize those aspects of our faith which bear witness to our common patrimony and our spiritual ties with Jews."⁷ The statement warned against the "... all too common view of Judaism as a legalistic and decadent form of religion . . ." and, instead, urged Catholics "... to see post-biblical Judaism as rich in religious values and worthy of our sincere respect and esteem."⁸ It underscored the need to "... learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience . . ."⁹ and spelled out the point that

... an overwhelming majority of Jews see themselves bound in one way or another to the land of Israel . . . Whatever difficulties Christians may have in sharing this view they should strive to understand this link between land and people which Jews have expressed in their writings and worship throughout two millennia as a longing for the homeland, holy Zion.¹⁰

With the publication of the new National Catechetical Directory the same principles will soon be placed in the hands of every Roman Catholic teacher of religion in the United States.

The Los Angeles scene vividly reflects the international and national development. Before, and even a few years after, Vatican II, Catholic involvement in interreligious affairs was almost entirely limited to two campuses, Immaculate Heart College and Loyola (now Loyola-Marymount) University. The latter school, particularly under the leadership of its President, Fr. Charles Casassa, S.J., initiated: a course on Judaism taught by a rabbi and sponsored by the Jewish Chautauqua Society; the Loyola Human Relations Workshop, in cooperation with the

5. "Guidelines for Catholic-Jewish Relations, U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops. March 1967" in Helga Croner, ed., *Stepping Stones to Further Jewish-Christian Relations* (London and New York: Stimulus Books, 1977).

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-34.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

9. *Ibid.* This quotation is from the 1975 Vatican Guidelines.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

American Jewish Committee; and an annual interreligious Institute, in cooperation with A.J.C. and N.C.C.J.

In 1969, Timothy Manning—since 1973, Cardinal Manning—was appointed Archbishop of Los Angeles and he immediately expressed his friendship for the Jewish community both within his Archdiocese and from the pulpits of synagogues and the platforms of community organizations. His Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, headed by Fr. Royale Vadakin, soon began to make an impact on both the Catholic and the Jewish communities.

Archbishop Manning himself initiated an on-going dialogue for ten of his priests and ten rabbis—Conservative, Orthodox and Reform—representing the Board of Rabbis of Southern California. Had their deliberations produced only a sense of fellowship and mutual understanding it would have been enough. In addition, however, their work bore visible results in an important section on Catholic-Jewish relations in the “Archdiocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Guidelines.”¹¹ Published in 1976, the “guidelines” tackle sensitive issues:

Proselytizing: Efforts to convert Jews to Christianity, or views of Judaism as an “incomplete faith” are considered unacceptable;

The State of Israel: To American Jews, Israel is not “their country” but the Israelis are part of “their people.”¹²

They suggest forms of parish and synagogue interaction acceptable to both Catholics and Jews. They comment extensively on the problems of intermarriage and include not only the rulings of the Archdiocese but, also, a statement by the Board of Rabbis.¹³

In “Lenten Pastoral Reflections,”¹⁴ the same group created instructions and readings to prevent anti-Jewish interpretations of the Scripture selections for the pre-Easter season. Both the “Guidelines” and the “Lenten Reflections” have been distributed in other dioceses.

Other projects stimulated by the Commission include an ongoing faculty exchange between the Archdiocesan Seminary and Hebrew Union College; the participation of Jewish scholars in annual training conferences for religious instructors; an annual Model Seder at the Wilshire Boulevard Temple for all senior students of Catholic High Schools; an all-day conference involving religious sisters of various orders and leaders of Jewish women’s organizations; pulpit exchanges between

11. Published by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, September 1, 1976.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 21–24.

14. Published by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Lent 1977. The comment prior to the reading of the Passion in John 18:1–19, 42, concludes: “The hostility between the earliest Christians and their Jewish brothers, as manifested in the Gospel of John, cannot be continued today. The timeless message of reconciliation and love for all mankind has to replace early Christians’ prejudice against their Jewish contemporaries before Jesus’ work will ever truly be finished.”

priests and rabbis; and joint study groups for synagogues and parish churches. A widely circulated pastoral letter by Cardinal Manning, during the Jewish High Holy Days in 1977, urged that "... prayerful blessings ..." be extended to "... our brothers and sisters of the Jewish community ..." and emphasized that "... mission and witness for the Catholic includes neither proselytism nor crusade." A year-long consultation, between priests and lay representatives of the Archdiocese, on the one hand, and, on the other, a group of rabbis and lay people representing the Board of Rabbis and the American Jewish Committee, resulted in the joint publication of a statement on "Respect for Life" which included, side by side, the divergent positions of the two traditions as well as common goals recommended to both communities. It concluded:

While Roman Catholics and Jews may not agree to make the prohibition of all abortions American law, nonetheless we should work together to make respect for life, and particularly the joyful celebration of new life, an American ideal.¹⁵

It will take much time and effort to overcome two thousand years of teaching of contempt, but a significant beginning has been made. The publication of the pamphlet, "Respect for Life" indicates that we can communicate harmoniously on a controversial subject, that we can jointly express strongly divergent views and that, in spite of radically different theological presuppositions, we may be ready to confront critical issues together.

Outreach to Other Religions

Increased communication between the religions of the East and the West is a necessity in this shrinking world. Between Judaism and Islam it is of special importance to Israel and the Middle East. Until now, such contracts have been limited mainly to scholarly exchange and to occasional high-level convocations, such as the 1974 Colombo Conference in Sri Lanka, sponsored by the World Council of Churches. The Interreligious Council of Southern California is one of the few organizations which regularly brings together representatives of most of the major world religions.

Los Angeles is a fertile ground for interreligious exchange, not only because it is home to countless religions, sects and cults, but, also, because of a long tradition of openness in intergroup relations. In the 1920s, 30s and 40s, Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin, together with the late Archbishop John J. Cantwell and the late Bishop William Bertram Stevens of the Episcopal

15. "Respect for Life—Jewish and Roman Catholic Reflections on Abortion and Related Issues," published jointly, (September 1977) by the Board of Rabbis of Southern California, Los Angeles Chapter of the American Jewish Committee and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Church, initiated a number of joint projects. The most far-reaching was the University Religious Conference which brought together, under one roof, student religious organizations of every creed and which had an impact far beyond the academic community. Rabbi Magnin, after 62 years in Wilshire Boulevard Temple, continues to be a force for interfaith understanding. His invitation brings over a thousand Christian clergy and religious teachers to his synagogue annually to listen to his explanation of Jewish beliefs and practices.

Early efforts for the improvement of interreligious as well as of race relations were made by the County Commission on Human Relations (an arm of county government) by the National Council of Christians and Jews, especially through its summer camp program for High School students, and by the American Jewish Committee through its Living Room Dialogues.

The Interreligious Council of Southern California started, in 1969, as a tri-faith organization. From the beginning, it was more than a gathering of "people of good will;" it was the official coordinating arm for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, the Board of Rabbis and two Protestant Church Councils, with monthly meetings of delegates and occasional meetings of heads of denominations. Within a few years it expanded to include the organizations of the Greek Orthodox Church, of Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs and Bahais. Its objectives include both mutual understanding and joint action "when by common consent the members feel that moral leadership is needed by the people of the community." Its projects range from establishment of a "Release on Own Recognizance" program at the County courts and involvement with problems of welfare, housing and employment, to annual study retreats for clergy, annual conferences for students of Catholic, Jewish and Protestant seminaries, the publication of a history of the religious communities of Southern California, and the celebration of the Nation's Bicentennial with a Festival of Faiths. The Council's most important product, perhaps, is the regular contact between people who need one another, the close personal relationship between religious leaders who might otherwise have remained strangers, and the growing mutual trust among the diverse faith groups.

Interfaith and the "Jewish Agenda"

The improved mutual relationship between Catholics and Jews and the activities of the Interreligious Council have rendered the entire community more sensitive to the specific problems of the Jewish community. Because we have shown concern for what may be troubling Roman Catholics, Lutherans or Baptists, Buddhists, Moslems or Hindus, they are willing to hear what hurts us.

A major interreligious committee for Soviet Jews is headed by a Catholic cleric. When a resolution of concern for Soviet Jewry came

before the Interreligious Council it was seconded by the head of the Islamic community, with the comment that his fellow Moslems in the U.S.S.R. are victims of the same oppression as are the Jews. The same Moslem leader risked the anger of some of his flock by publicly condemning the Munich massacre. He has invited rabbis to speak from his pulpit and, in turn, has addressed Jewish audiences.

For the major concerns of the Jewish community we have sought response mainly from Protestants and Catholics, and that response has been forthcoming. At the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, denominational leaders publicly supported Israel. They did so again at the time of the U.N. resolution against Zionism. A group of fifteen ministers and priests, together with three rabbis, journeyed to Rome, Geneva and Israel. Some of these Christian clergymen have since led tours to Israel. There are, of course, strongly pro-Arab clerics in Los Angeles, and there is a serious concern for the rights of the Palestinians; but articulate Christian leadership has spoken out consistently for Israel's right to exist with safe and secure borders.

Additional Christian support may even be voiced on the issue of proselytism. Cardinal Manning's pastoral letter on this subject has been mentioned. Working as part of a task Force on Missionary Activities of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation Council, leaders of the Board of Rabbis and the American Jewish Committee met a broad spectrum of Protestant denominational representatives in order to explain the Jewish position on Christian proselytism and, particularly, on the so-called Hebrew Christians. The response was thoughtful and sympathetic. It is too soon to tell how many Protestant leaders will speak out as clearly as did Cardinal Manning, but we know that we are not alone.

The interfaith movement began, to a major extent, on Jewish initiative. Jewish religious and community organizations still have the most extensive permanent apparatus for interreligious activities, but the initiative is no longer one-sided. The momentum of Roman Catholic activity should quicken Protestant-Jewish affairs. And who knows how soon developments in the Middle East will cause a ground-swell in Islamic-Jewish relations?

The initial purpose of the interfaith movement was to overcome prejudice, to change attitudes. This goal remains and must remain, as long as there is anti-Semitism or, for that matter, anti-Catholicism, anti-Protestantism, anti-Islamism, or any hatred rooted in religious differences. At the same time, mutual understanding has matured sufficiently so that we can enter into a new phase of interreligious activity: to search for joint goals and for mutual interests, to labor together for the common good.

Catholic Statements on Jews—A Revolution in Progress

LEONARD SWIDLER

Relations with Jews must be avoided because this people is very estranged from the doctrine of the Cross of Christ, a scandalous thing for them. Parish priests must take care that Christians do not work for Jews who would use them as servants or subordinates. If there is no danger of faith or morals, paid daily work may be undertaken for Jews, either in agriculture or in factories. A grave warning is given, however: such services must not lead to others which would endanger the soul, arising above all from a desire for lucre. Moreover, the faithful must take care—according to the warning of Benedict XIV (*Enc. A quo primum*, 1751)—never to need the help or support of Jews.¹

THUS SPOKE THE OFFICIAL CATHOLIC CHURCH of The Netherlands gathered in a national Council in 1924. It was not until 1970 that a similar national Pastoral Council of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands voted in plenary session to recommend “that the Dutch Episcopate should be asked to declare null and void what was said in the *acta et decreta concilii provincialis ultrajectensis* 1924, canon 1325, par. 3, p. 183.”²

What happened in between to account for the reversal was not only the traumatic experience of the Nazi war and Holocaust of the Jews. That had ended in 1945, a quarter of a century before the repentant statement. Further, surveys of English, French, Spanish, and Italian religious education materials of the Catholic Church, published from the end of the war to the early 1960s, reveal the continuation of a depressingly widespread “teaching of contempt.”³

What happened in between was the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church and its issuance of the “Declaration of the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions” (*Nostra Aetate*—1965). In the history of the Catholic Church, Vatican II was a momentous watershed which will take on ever more historic proportions, with the passage of time, as its implications are worked out and its initiatives are developed.

1. *Acta et decreta concilii provincialis ultrajectensis* 1924, canon 1325, par. 3, p. 183.

2. Helga Croner, ed., *Stepping Stones to Further Jewish-Christian Relations* (New York, 1977), p. 55. Most of the documents on Jewish-Catholic relations referred to in this essay are conveniently collected in this book. From this point forward such quoted documents will simply be documented by page numbers referring to the Croner book.

3. Cf. John T. Pawlikowski, *Catechetics and Prejudice* (New York, 1973) and Claire Huchet Bishop, *How Catholics Look at Jews* (New York, 1974), the former surveying American Catholic catechetical materials and the latter Italian, Spanish, and French. Eugene Fisher, *Faith Without Prejudice* (New York, 1977), finds significant improvement in the American materials published since 1965.

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This is nowhere more dramatically apparent than in the relationship of the Catholic Church with Judaism. At the same time, of course, no Catholic theologian or church leader would want to claim that *Nostra Aetate* is a complete, satisfactory statement of that relationship. Rather, as the French bishops expressed it, the Declaration “marks a turning point in Christian attitudes toward Jews and opens a path, permitting us to take the exact measure of our task.” In other words, *Nostra Aetate* “should be considered a beginning rather than a final achievement” (p. 60).

Since the 1965 Vatican II Declaration there have been a set of Guidelines for its implementation, as well as two major study papers that have come out of the Vatican, eight documents from seven different national Catholic hierarchies or their agencies, with varying degrees of “officialness,” and many guidelines and statements by local dioceses. The existence of well thought out theological and ecclesiastical statements, by themselves, will not, of course, transform Catholic attitudes towards Jews and Judaism. However, such public “official” statements are requisite instruments needed to bring about widespread changes, and are a reflection of the changes in thought that have already taken place among churchly opinionmakers, i.e., pioneer theologians and activists. Hence, it will be of value to analyze briefly these various official and quasi-official statements, both to discern where significant shifts in thought and attitudes among “leaders” have occurred and to learn where the path of implementation is pointing.

Of course, the Vatican Declaration itself will carry the greatest weight, being signed by over 2400 Catholic bishops of the world and the Pope. Next in weightiness would come the “Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (n. 4)” issued by the newly established Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews in 1975. Then, the “official” statements by national hierarchies or their agencies would follow, with perhaps the two Vatican study papers hard by and the study papers of agencies of national hierarchies. However, since these statements are much more theological than juridical documents, giving them precise relative legal weight is not terribly important. Much more significant is the development of various lines of theological conceptualization, for a great deal of cross-influence, supplementation and building on one another can be easily discerned among these and other church and theological writings. Hence, after a few words characterizing the statements, the rest of this essay will focus on a number of key themes expressed in them.

Characterization of the Statements

The Vatican II Declaration (*Nostra Aetate*) is quite short, but immensely important. The Vatican study paper of 1969 was excellent both in its expansion of the theological themes broached or implied in *Nostra*

Aetate, but portions of it, especially its frank, sympathetic discussion of the State of Israel, were resisted by more cautious Vatican elements. Nevertheless, the document got into the public domain and became influential at many levels. Moreover, much of it flowed into the final draft of the Vatican Guidelines of 1975, which exhibited significant progress beyond *Nostra Aetate*, though in a number of ways it fell short of the 1969 Vatican study paper. However, on the occasion of the issuance of the 1975 Vatican Guidelines, the American bishops issued a Statement which very deliberately picked up the sympathetic discussion of Israel that is found in the 1969 Vatican study paper but that was left out of the 1975 Vatican Guidelines.

The second major Vatican study paper is an essay written by Dr. Tommaso Federici, Professor of Biblical Theology at the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome, and a Consultant to the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, for the Sixth World Session of the Liaison Committee Between the Roman Catholic Church and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations in 1977. It has been very well received on Vatican, national, and local levels. Its major contribution is the spelling out of the complete Catholic renunciation of proselytization on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a commitment to dialogue, two key themes which will be analyzed below.

Five major statements on Jewish-Catholic relations by either the national hierarchies themselves or by their agencies in the United States, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France were issued between 1967 and 1975, along with a major statement by the Archdiocese of Vienna. The Latin American bishops and the national hierarchies of Switzerland and Germany issued brief statements in 1968, 1974, 1976, respectively. Given the history of Germany, this showing of the German Catholic Church has been extremely disappointing.

Anti-Semitism

Though it is nothing new for the Roman Catholic Church officially to reject anti-Semitism, the action of the Second Vatican Council places such a rejection on the highest, most authoritative level possible: "The Church decries (*reprobat*) hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone" (p. 2). The 1969 Vatican study paper uses a perhaps even stronger term, condemnation: "The dignity of the human person requires the condemnation of all forms of anti-Semitism" (p. 7), and the 1975 Vatican Guidelines reiterate that "The Church . . . condemns . . . all forms of anti-Semitism and discrimination" (p. 11). The 1970 national Dutch Catholic statement is also very explicit: "The Pastoral Council condemns every form of anti-Semitism" (p. 49). The other statements simply assume the condemnation and go on from there.

The Statement of the Catholic bishops of West Germany (1976) says contritely:

We turned our backs to this persecuted Jewish people and were silent about the crimes perpetrated on Jews and Judaism. . . . The honesty of our intention to renew ourselves depends on the admission of this guilt, incurred by our country and our church (p. 66).

The 1969 Vatican study paper explicitly says that "Christians ask pardon of their Jewish brothers," (p. 7), while the 1977 Vatican study paper refers to the oppression of Jews as "attacks on the very existence of the Jewish people as such precisely because they are Jewish with deliberate diabolical intention—and the responsibilities of Christians must not be concealed."⁴

Deicide

Over the centuries, all of the Jewish people have often been held responsible for the death of Jesus. Since, in the Christian tradition, Jesus is believed to be human-divine, this responsibility for his death has often been expressed in the single word, "deicide." The Fathers of Vatican II wished to repudiate this ancient popular Christian belief and, up to the final draft of *Nostra Aetate*, stated specifically that the charge of deicide (*deicidii rea*) against the Jewish people was to be rejected. For a variety of reasons, not all of them admirable, the term "deicide" was eliminated from the text, but, more importantly, the essence of the rejection of the deicide charge was retained.

Subsequently, the 1969 Vatican study paper calls attention to this important authoritative repudiation, as do also the 1975 Vatican Guidelines. The Vienna archdiocesan Memorandum of 1968 (in general, an excellent statement) phrases the point this way:

We must never speak of a one-sided guilt of Jews in the cross of Christ, nor must the cross be interpreted as a consequence of the blindness or ill-will of the Jewish leaders. . . . We must by all means prevent the problem of guilt from developing into an accusation by (sinful) Christians against (also sinful) Jews (p. 46).

The 1970 national Dutch Catholic statement is even stronger and more explicit, rejecting specifically the term "deicide."

The Jewish people is not collectively guilty of the passion and death of Jesus Christ nor . . . condemned nor bereft of its election. Their sufferings, dispersion, and persecutions are not punishment for the crucifixion or rejection of Jesus. It is unjust to accuse the Jews of "deicide" (p. 53).

The 1973 national Belgian Catholic study paper also states that "it is

4. Tommaso Federici, "Study Outline on the Mission and Witness of the Church," *Face to Face* (Fall/Winter 1977): 28.

obvious that the Jewish people as such is not guilty of the condemnation and death of Jesus Christ" and insists that, from a theological perspective, the solidarity in sin of all humanity be underscored (p. 58).

In 1975, the U.S. Catholic bishops, in their statement, attempted to lay to rest the rather ridiculous interpretation of Vatican II's repudiation of the decide charge as an "exoneration" of the Jewish people by the Catholic Church. In fact, the Council's Declaration simply publicly recognizes a fact: "The truth is that the Council acknowledged that the Jewish people never were, nor are they now, guilty of the death of Christ" (p. 32).

New Testament Problems

Nostra Aetate says that, in teaching and preaching, care should be taken that nothing be taught "which does not conform to the truth of the Gospel" (p. 2). Picking up on that opening, the 1969 Vatican study paper and, following it, the 1975 Vatican Guidelines encourage translators to pay special attention to New Testament terms that, in the past, had been the occasion of anti-Semitism:

Thus the formula "the Jews," in St. John sometimes according to the context means "the leaders of the Jews" or "the adversaries of Jesus," terms which express better the thought of the Evangelist and avoid appearing to arraign the Jewish people as such. Another example is the use of the words "Pharisee" and "Phariseism," which have taken on a largely pejorative meaning (p. 13).

The 1967 U.S. bishop's Guidelines, the 1968 Vienna Memorandum, the 1970 Dutch statement, and the 1973 French bishops' Statement all take up the same points in a similarly positive fashion, in some instances with even greater detail.

The Jewishness of Jesus and Christianity

The Second Vatican Council made a strong point of the Christian rootage in the Hebraic-Jewish tradition. Among a number of statements impressive for their positive stress is one saying that the Catholic Church cannot forget that it "draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree on to which has been grafted the wild olive shoot, the Gentiles." It also notes explicitly that it is from the Jewish people that sprang Jesus, Mary, the Apostles, and most of the early disciples (p. 1). The same points are made repeatedly in the 1969 and 1975 Vatican documents, and even expanded, especially stressing the Jewishness of Jesus. The 1969 Vatican study paper states:

Jesus, as also his disciples, was a Jew. He represented himself as continuing and fulfilling the anterior Revelation, the basic teachings of which he offered anew, using the same teaching method as the rabbis of his time. The

points on which he took issue with the Judaism of his time are fewer than those in which he found himself in agreement with it. Whenever he opposed it, this was always from within the Jewish people, just as did the prophets before him (p. 9).

The 1975 Vatican Guidelines use much the same language.

The U.S. bishops' 1975 Statement expands this point of Jesus' Jewishness still further in an extremely positive and forthcoming tone:

Christians have not fully appreciated their Jewish roots. Early in Christian history a de-Judaizing process dulled our awareness of our Jewish beginnings. The Jewishness of Jesus, of his mother, his disciples, of the primitive Church, was lost from view. That Jesus was called Rabbi; that he was born, lived and died under the Law; that he and Peter and Paul worshipped in the Temple—these facts were blurred by the controversy that alienated Christians from the Synagogue. . . . By the third century, however, a de-Judaizing process had set in which tended to undervalue the Jewish origins of the Church . . . Most essential concepts in the Christian Creed grew at first in Judaic soil. Uprooted from that soil, these basic concepts cannot be perfectly understood (p. 32).

Israel

As mentioned above, the land or state of Israel is not mentioned in Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate*, but is the subject of a sympathetic statement in the 1969 Vatican study paper. This paragraph, which caused a bit of flap when it was leaked to the press by Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore, does not appear in any form in the officially issued 1975 Vatican Guidelines. The most important portion of the 1969 paragraph is as follows:

Fidelity to the covenant was linked to the gift of a land. . . . Christians must attempt to understand and respect the religious significance of this link between the people and the land. The existence of the State of Israel should not be separated from this perspective (p. 7).

Also, as noted above, the American bishops did their part to fill in this missing element with their 1975 Statement, which says, in part:

An overwhelming majority of Jews see themselves bound in one way or another to the land of Israel. Most Jews see this tie to the land as essential to their Jewishness. Whatever difficulties Christians may experience in sharing this view they should strive to understand this link between land and people (p. 34).

The 1973 Statement of the French bishops contains an extended, nuanced discussion of Israel. To begin with, they note that "today more than ever, it is difficult to pronounce a well-considered theological opinion on the return of the Jewish people to 'its' land" (p. 63). They go on to stress that "Christians must first of all not forget the gift once made by

God to the people of Israel, of a land where it was called to be reunited,” insisting that “the conscience of the world community cannot refuse the Jewish people . . . the right and means for a political existence among the nations” (p. 63).

The somewhat earlier, 1970, Dutch Catholic Statement is briefer and blunter in its sympathetic support of the religious link between the Jewish people and Israel:

Religious thinking about the very existence of the Jewish people as such shows that there is a particular relationship between the Jewish people and the Promised Land. The Jewish people consider this relationship not only as a historical, cultural, or religious phenomenon but as an indissoluble element in their expectation of the day when all nations will embrace in peace and justice. To neglect or deny this fact may be the cause of misunderstanding and help to nourish prejudice about the nature of the Jewish people and its place among the nations (p. 50).

Proselytism

Nostra Aetate of Vatican II does not discuss proselytism. However, the Council's Decree on Ecumenism does reject it (pars. 28, 46) and so does its Declaration On Religious Liberty when it states that all “must at all times avoid any action which seems to suggest coercion or dishonest or unworthy persuasion especially when dealing with the uneducated or the poor” (par. 4).

The 1967 American Catholic Guidelines led the way with a straightforward, explicit rejection of proselytism, saying that “it is understood that proselytism is to be carefully avoided” (p. 18). The 1969 Vatican study paper followed with a similar straightforward rejection: “All intent of proselytizing and conversion is excluded” (p. 7). The 1975 Vatican Guidelines say as much while apparently being chary of the word “proselytism”:

Dialogue demands respect for the other as he is; above all, respect for his faith and his religious convictions . . . maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty, in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (p. 12).

The 1970 Dutch Catholic Statement also categorically rejects proselytism: “Any intention or design for proselytism must be rejected as contrary to human dignity and Christian conviction” (p. 51). The 1973 French bishops' Statement is, if possible, still stronger, though it does not use the word proselytism. In speaking of a “disloyal attempt to detach the other from his community and draw him to one's own,” the French bishops wrote that

Such an intention must be excluded not only out of respect which must

apply to dialogue with any person, but for a particular reason to which Christians, and especially the clergy, must pay more attention. That reason is that the Jews as people have been the object of an "eternal Covenant" without which the "new Covenant" would not even exist. Far from envisaging the disappearance of the Jewish community, the Church is in search of a living bond with it (p. 64).

If these signals have not been clear enough, the latest document, the 1977 Vatican study paper by Prof. Tommaso Federici, of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relation with the Jews, mentioned above, spells out the matter in great lucidity and detail. The kinds of proselytism that are explicitly rejected leave little room for exceptions:

The Church thus rejects in a clear way every form of proselytism. This means the exclusion of any sort of witness and preaching which in any way constitutes a physical, moral, psychological or cultural constraint on the Jews, both individuals and communities, such as might in any way destroy or even simply reduce their personal judgment, free will and full autonomy of decision at the personal or community level . . . [A]ny action is rejected which aims to change the religious faith of the Jews, whether groups, minorities or individuals, by offering more or less overt protection, legal, material, cultural, political and other advantages, on educational, social or other pretexts. . . . *A fortiori*, every form of threat or coercion is excluded, even when indirect or disguised. Freedom of conscience is an inalienable right of the human person and of human groups and must, therefore, be guaranteed against every possible attack and coercion in every sphere, internal and external, physical and moral.⁵

Also specifically repudiated is any kind of organization for the conversion of Jews—such as, unfortunately, a number of other Christian Churches still have: "Consequently, attempts to set up organizations of any sort, particularly educational or welfare organizations, for the 'conversion' of Jews must be rejected."⁶

Then, in a final attempt to show that this is not a Catholic sleight-of-hand, or rather, sleight-of-mind, trick, the Vatican paper states: "All the above is stated openly and without mental reservations and follows from the official texts of the Church (cf. *supra*)."⁷

Dialogue

Since Vatican II, in general, meant a coming out of the ghetto for the Catholic Church and a renunciation of polemics and proselytism, the only possible alternative stance vis à vis Judaism was that of dialogue. The Council embraced that alternative: "This Sacred Synod wants to foster and recommend . . . fraternal dialogues" (p. 1). The 1969 Vatican study paper continues the thrust, saying, "A true dialogue must now be estab-

5. Ibid., p. 30.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

lished. The dialogue, in effect, comprises a favored means for promoting better mutual understanding and a deepening of one's own tradition" (p. 7). On this matter, again, the 1975 Vatican Guidelines basically repeat the 1969 study paper: "Real dialogue must be established. Dialogue . . . constitutes a particularly suitable means of favoring a better mutual knowledge and, especially in the case of dialogue between Jews and Christians, of probing the riches of one's own tradition" (p. 12). As with the explicit rejection of proselytism, so also in this matter of the promotion of dialogue, the language of the 1967 American Catholic Guidelines appears to have provided the first model: "A favored instrument is the dialogue" (p. 19).

This language is echoed, in expanded form, in the 1977 Vatican study paper: "In this way dialogue is today becoming one of the major forms of communication between the Church and contemporary men. In fact, it has been authoritatively noted that dialogue is the form of communication par excellence in an adult society."⁸ This excellent study paper goes on creatively to analyze interreligious dialogue, ending with the statement:

In their turn, the central insights of other religious faiths can enrich the Christian, as they offer him new possibilities of expression and encourage the development of hitherto latent strengths and potentialities. If this is true of other religions in relation to Christians, it is all the more so of the Jewish religion to which Christians are, and must remain, bound by so many unbreakable bonds. This means that with dialogue Christians are embarking on a new attitude, a substantial element of which consists in being ready and able to listen to Jews who want to talk about themselves and their vision of reality; in being ready to be taught and in being willing to learn in a spirit of gratitude. This also avoids even the unintentional harm done when one tries to understand Judaism through an interpretation which projects onto it categories which are not original to it.⁹

Conclusion

Though not everything that ought to be said about Catholic-Jewish relations has been said, or even said adequately, in Catholic Church documents, and though fine documents do not mean automatic, thorough, and mass implementation, still, when one recalls the long history of past Catholic enunciations concerning Jews (e.g., Ecumenical Council Lateran IV in 1215 which forbade Jews to appear in public during Easter Week, forbade Christian princes, under threat of excommunication, to give an office to Jews, and required Jews to wear a distinctive dress, etc.,¹⁰ as well as the national Dutch Catholic councilar canon of 1924, mentioned above), *Nostra Aetate* and these consequent Catholic documents evidence an extraordinary ideological revolution.

8. Ibid., p. 31

9. Ibid.

10. Walter Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II*, (New York, 1966), p. 667.

Has Interfaith a Future?

JOHN B. SHEERIN

IN THE TURBULENT TWENTIES, ANTI-Semitism found expression in publications such as the fraudulent *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and serious citizens began to worry about this ugly phobia as a real threat to the national as well as the local community. The religious intolerance of the decade prompted the founding of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in order to promote amity and neighborliness among all religions "with a view to the establishment of a social order in which the religious ideals of brotherhood and justice shall become the standards of human relationships."

The NCCJ was not an interfaith movement in the strict sense, but its trio of priest, minister and rabbi touring the country to combat religious intolerance was a promise of, and a prelude to, the dialogue to come. The climate of the time, even at churchly levels, did not lend itself gladly to dialogue: Roman Catholic diocesan chanceries, for instance, forbade priests to appear on the same public platform with a rabbi or minister lest they give the impression that "one religion is as good as another."

Today, the interfaith movement has made substantial, if not dramatic, progress here and abroad. For reasons of space, this article will focus on Catholic interfaith work in America. The American Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, now located in Washington, was established in 1967, when the dialogue began and many bishops immediately created diocesan commissions to implement a decree of the Second Vatican Council, approved by the Catholic Bishops of the world at St. Peter's in Rome in 1965, *Nostra Aetate*, No. 4 (often popularly called *The Jewish Declaration*). It was the Second Vatican Council that brought world attention to focus on the interfaith movement and terminated long centuries of silence, alienation and misunderstanding between the Catholic Church and the Synagogue. The vote on the decree (2221 in favor, 88 opposed) voiced the Catholic sorrow for the agony and scandal that the Church had caused in the long centuries of hostility.

The decree condemned "displays of anti-Semitism staged against Jews at any time by anyone" and pointed out not only that the Christian Church received the Old Testament from the people of the Covenant but that she still draws sustenance from Judaism, "the well-cultivated olive tree on to which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles." Judaism did not become moribund, to be displaced by Christianity: the decree

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makes clear that the Jewish religion has a continuing validity, for God still holds the Jews most dear and “does not repent of the gifts he makes or of the calls he issues,” as St Paul had said in his *Epistle to the Romans* (11:28–29).

The Jewishness of Christianity runs like a golden thread through the decree (officially called a “declaration”). Another Vatican Council document, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, reinforces the emphasis of *Nostra Aetate* on Jewishness. This helps to counteract the effect of centuries of Catholic teaching of contempt for the Jews. The Biblical orientation of the Liturgy document tends to mute the Roman and Greek elements in Christianity and to accent the Hebraic, thus preparing the way for a proper re-Judaizing of Christianity.

The *Nostra Aetate* document encouraged “brotherly dialogues” with Jews, and soon thereafter Catholic-Jewish conversations took place on every level, from intellectual symposia to the social gatherings known as “living-room dialogues.” To quote Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, there was “an explosion of activity in interfaith circles.” The Secretariat in Washington became a beehive, keeping in close contact with major Jewish organizations, especially the Synagogue Council, the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League. In accordance with the admonition of *Nostra Aetate* that “in catechetical work and in the preaching of the Word of God they (instructors and homilists) teach nothing save what conforms to the truth of the Gospel and the Spirit of Christ,” Catholic teaching materials were carefully and systematically analyzed in order to remove references offensive to Jews and to the Spirit of Christ. Chairs of Judaism were established at many Catholic universities.

After what was a promising start, the dialogue came to an abrupt halt in 1967 as a result of the deplorable “Christian silence” in that year when the Arab armies were threatening to annihilate the two and a half million Jews in Israel. American Jews looked to Christians for an expression of humanitarian concern, but the official Church leadership was silent. Fortunately, the dialogue soon picked up momentum again and was back in stride in a few months.

The year 1975 was marked by notable progress. In the previous year, Pope Paul had created a *Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews* and in 1975 that Commission issued *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing Nostra Aetate, No. 4*. These *Guidelines* were carefully composed, evidencing the new insights into dialogue that resulted from ten years of experience since the Council. The document did, however, have one startling omission. Although the text itself said that Christians “must strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience,” nowhere was there any reference to Israel, in many ways the heart and center of Jewish religion.

One outstanding lesson that we have learned from the dialogue is the towering impact of the Holocaust on the sensitivities of Christians as well as of Jews. This monumental atrocity hovers over interfaith discussions

like a brooding presence, warning that such a monstrous outrage must never happen again. We can get some concept of its significance from a volume edited by Eva Fleischner, veteran of the inter-faith movement. Entitled *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era?* (KTAV), it is a collection of twenty-five papers delivered at a symposium at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, in New York, in June, 1974, by historians, sociologists, theologians and other scholars, each approaching the problem from his or her own perspective. Echoes of the Symposium have reverberated throughout the scholarly world, as evidenced by the selected bibliography that Miss Fleischner published in *Horizons*, Spring, 1977, in which she lists 60 books relating to the Holocaust, in addition to numerous articles and films. More than 30 years after the event, we find that interest in the atrocity is growing, rather than diminishing. Prof. Franklin H. Littell, for instance, has been conducting Holocaust symposia for years, exploring the religious, pseudo-religious and anti-religious roots of the Holocaust, with attention to other forces relevant to the near destruction of Western humanistic traditions. Of Christians it asks, "Could Hitler have accomplished what he did without centuries of Christian teaching of contempt?"

Another frequently-discussed topic in inter-faith dialogue is Israel, not only because of Arab hostility to the state, but, more importantly, because of Jewish consciousness of the immemorial tie between the people and the land given to them by God. The Christian in dialogue finds it difficult to understand this "theology of the land" because, *qua* Christian, he knows of no parallel in his own faith. There is no Jerusalem the Golden in his mind-set, no devotional link to Rome, Geneva or Westminster that is comparable to the Jew's link to Jerusalem.

Christian missionary campaigns have had no great impact on inter-group relations. Key '73, with its efforts to proselytize among Jews, was counterproductive. The Jews for Jesus movement claims 15,000 conversions in the last decade but its future is dubious. It gets scant attention from Catholics and there is reason to believe that its converts are personally unstable, the children of ultra-liberal Jewish families who have dabbled in drugs and have left home at an early age. The proliferation of mystical cults in the United States has not yielded any great harvest of conversions, nor have they affected the dialogue. There are many young Jews who are apparently seeking security in non-Jewish as well as Jewish mysticism, in Upanishads or Transcendental Meditation perhaps, but they are seldom interested in classical religions like Judaism or Christianity.

There are no organized proselytizing groups in Catholic circles focusing their attention on the conversion of Jews. Even among ultra-conservative Catholics there was no protest when, on March 27, 1977, at a meeting of the Liaison Committee of the Roman Catholic Church and the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, Dr.

Tommaso Federici delivered at Venice, Italy, a statement condemning all organized proselytizing campaigns. The Vatican press release about it stressed "the irreversibly changed attitude of the Catholic Church toward its relationship to Judaism." This was an allusion to the long centuries of coerced conversions of Jews. High pressure evangelism was described by Federici as out of harmony with the will of God "who invites men to respond freely to His will and to serve him in spirit and in truth."

While the dialogue is making steady progress in America, it is not gaining as rapidly as it should. For instance, it is not getting down to the level of ordinary parishioners among the 48 million Roman Catholics in America. Though startling changes have taken place at the highest ecclesiastical levels of Catholicism, the rank and file have not yet incorporated them into their way of life. As Gregory Baum points out, the changes lack drawing power as regards Catholic attitudes to Jews because contempt for the Jews is still to be found among the central Christian symbols. What is needed is a more socially responsible base for the new doctrines, for it is the symbols that build the society, give orientation to life and action and inspire personal commitment. These symbols, after centuries of contempt for the Jews, have left deep scars.

These scars also obscure the Christian perspective on the state of Israel. One rabbi said that "for us Jews, Israel is our Jesus." But many Christians do not understand that Israel is far more than a national state or that Jews are not perpetual wanderers on the earth. As late as 1948 this latter fable played an important role when the *Osservatore Romano* declared that "Modern Zionism is not the authentic heir of Biblical Israel but constitutes a lay state. This is why the Holy Land and its sacred places belong to Christianity, the veritable Israel."

Again, we encounter in dialogue some Christians who boast triumphantly of Christian universality in contrast to Jewish particularity, but the fact is that the early Christians set out to prove themselves an ethnic group replacing another ethnic group, "the old Israel." Or perhaps we meet with the assertion that Jesus, as Messiah, ushered in the Messianic age. We can no longer say, in all honesty, that the Jewish expectation of the Messianic age was realized through the Resurrection. We have to look into the fulfillment of the Jewish prophecies against the background of a Jewish reading of those prophecies. We also have to examine the present state of the world: has the world been radically transformed?

After centuries of "the teaching of contempt" it is hard for the average parishioner to take Jewish religion seriously. The failure to understand the meaning of the state of Israel is indicative of a general failure to understand great religious themes such as salvation and Christology. Likewise, many Jews feel that they cannot engage in dialogue with Christians because they see the adoration of Jesus as sheer idolatry and they simply cannot bring themselves to discuss it with Christians.

The problem in these cases is that the dialogue ceases to become a

situation of "equal to equal." The stage is set for conversation in such a way that the Christian assumes that he knows more about Judaism than does the Jew and condescendingly hopes that "the wandering Jew" will find religious authenticity in the Christian Church.

I agree with Monica Hellwig that the time is ripe for a new breakthrough precisely because Christian theology has been undergoing radical changes from within. We have re-examined the conceptual framework in which we have tried to formulate our experience of Jesus, and we have also re-examined our religious language. Words that we once used expressed the experience of believers based on science, psychiatry, etc., but now we know that the words in creeds and statements of faith are not divinely chosen. The existing formulas are not untouchable; they are venerable but not sacrosanct. Hence, there emerge new possibilities for a theological model of Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

The fact is that the Christian story is a reinterpretation of the religious heritage of Israel as the early Christians learned it as Jews. Therefore, according to Ms. Hellwig, the dialogue has to be structured by the Jewish frame of reference rather than the Christian one. "That means that we who are Christians must learn to think of our identity as that of a sect of Jews who have acquired a huge Gentile membership." Ms. Hellwig speaks not as a romancer but out of the hard experience of long years in the Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

We Christians will have to read the messianic prophecies with a new perspective and explain to Jewish friends why, for us, Jesus, in his death and in our experience of his Resurrection, makes the break-through that anticipates the reign of God, and we have to listen to what our Jewish partners in dialogue have to say about the coming of God's reign.

This theological model may well prove to be the shape of things to come in the Catholic-Jewish dialogue, an approach that might open up new wells of insight to help make the dialogue blossom like the rose.

1. Monica Hellwig "Why We Still Can't Talk," *The New Catholic World*. (January/February, 1974):41.

Zionism, the State of Israel, and the Jewish-Christian Dialogue

EDWARD H. FLANNERY

IN THE INTERFAITH DEVELOPMENT OF THE past half-century, Jewish-Christian understanding arrived last on the scene, but, once begun, made the fastest progress. Its tardy arrival is explainable by the duration and depth of misunderstanding that separated Jews and Christians in the past, while its rapid development stems from many influences, but, more immediately, from the impact of two happenings: the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel.

Many, but, wrongly, in my view, consider the first of these the more potent causative agent. The termination of the Holocaust in 1945 is separated from the establishment of the State of Israel by only three years, yet this chronology tends to distort our judgment of the relative impact that these events have had on the course of Jewish-Christian relations. It is an error to see the Holocaust as a clearly observable happening that was fully assessed during, or soon after, its occurrence. More than one complex instrument of analysis was required over several years before the mind-shattering fact that six million Jews had been murdered was known with certitude; and the popular estimate, especially in America, lagged badly behind the revelations of scholarly research.¹ Further, when the magnitude of the genocide was established and well publicized, no commensurate reaction on the part of the non-Jewish, or Christian, population resulted. A stubborn reluctance to accept the enormity and the uniqueness of the catastrophe and to appreciate its significance, whether in human, moral, or theological terms, has, up to the present time, dogged the Christian effort to approach Jews in understanding. It is heartening to report that the last few years have seen a veering away from this minimalist posture toward the Holocaust. The change came, however, as a result, rather than as a cause, of the rapid growth of understanding between Christians and Jews. And it is a change yet to have its full effect on the quality of Jewish-Christian encounter.

The State of Israel strikes quite a different posture in the interfaith development. Long before Israel was a state, the resettlement of Jews in their homeland had registered strongly on the consciousness of many Christians. A complete account of Christian interest and involvement in

1. Cf. C.H. Stember, *The Jews in the Mind of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), pp. 141-42.

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the Zionist development would take us back several centuries to those proto-Zionists, Christians who, mostly from evangelical motives, urged a repatriation of Jews in Palestine long before Jews themselves were comfortable with the idea.² For our purpose, it is enough to signalize the wide scope of non-Jewish support of Balfour's principle of political commitment to the establishment of a national home for Jews in Palestine.

From 1920 on, with the rise of Arab hostility to Zionism and its consequent violence, the settlement of Jews in Palestine and the ambivalent British implementation of the Balfour policy thrust the "Jewish question" into the foreground of world attention. This very notoriety could not but focus attention on deeper levels of Jewish existence: its plight in the modern world and in times past. Reasonable persons had to agree with Herzl that the best solution to Jewish difficulties would be the normalization of Jewish life: to their diaspora must be added a homeland. Thoughtful Christians were impelled to go deeper still, to enter the dark regions of their anti-Semitism and the anti-Judaism of their theologies. It may have been in the lucubrations on these data that the real beginnings of present-day Christian-Jewish understanding began. The Christian ecumenical movement was already underway, and this, too, beckoned to Christians to examine the entire problem of their relations with Jews and Judaism. There was enough disturbing material before the Holocaust to impel Christians to come to terms with their attitudes and responsibilities toward Jews.

It would be a mistake, on the other hand, to see the impetus toward dialogue coming exclusively from the Christian side—though it had to come mostly from that side by reason of the heavy debit on the Christian ledger in all matters Jewish. On a scholarly level, Jewish spokesmen of the highest order had already approached, or accepted the approach of, their Christian colleagues in mutual intelligence and dialogue. Rosenzweig and Buber leap to mind. In many ways, their admirable contributions have not been surpassed or even matched to this day. But the level of these encounters was too lofty to generate a movement of practical consequence. And the time was not ready for those surprising advances.

As the conflict between Arabs and Jews over Palestine worsened throughout the twenties, thirties, and early forties, there emerged in the background, as a muted counterpoint, a struggle in the Churches between pro-Zionists and anti-Zionists. It was an uneven battle. The former were few in number and not highly placed in position. The latter enjoyed the backing of a millennial theological tradition that forbade Jews a return to their homeland or Temple.³ It was this same tradition that held up the entry of the Christian-Jewish dialogue into the ecumenical forum well

2. Cf. B. Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 251 ff.

3. This was by no means a universal tradition. Only a few of the Fathers of the Church held to it, yet it became a wide-spread belief throughout Christian history.

after Christian denominations were already on the path of fruitful discussions.

The actual establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and its survival in face of the five-pronged Arab attack that followed was the turning point. Reality and history speak louder than do theological theories. Positive theology, that branch of the theological science that builds its conclusions on the happenings of history as well as on revelation, came to the fore and, before long, age-old anti-Judaic assumptions were up for review and rejection. By the sixties, the Jewish-Christian dialogue was pressing forward at a pace to enable it, by the seventies, to surpass intra-Christian ecumenism in vigor and productivity.

The burden of this paper is to accredit this process and progress of the Jewish-Christian dialogue to the emergence and survival of the State of Israel. The connection between the Israeli State and the interfaith encounter between Judaism and Christianity is not, historically, clearly observable, and much research will be required to demonstrate it. My thesis is predicated, rather, on inner conditions of the Christian psyche that underlay and antedated the Christian-Jewish dialogue and Christian reaction to Israel as a political entity. I refer to anti-Semitism, both in its conscious and unconscious states, and to philo-Semitism.⁴ That a connection would arise between the growth of Zionism or the establishment of Israel and these Christian subjectivities could only be anticipated.

The reality of Christian anti-Semitism and its effects is hardly open to question. Some, I recognize, would make the theological anti-Judaism of Christian teaching a co-equal, if not more potent, obstacle to Jewish-Christian understanding, but not wisely, I believe. Anti-Semitism, progeny of anti-Judaism, has long since surpassed its parent in vitality and effectiveness. A historical reversal has taken place. In earlier periods, anti-Judaism gave rise to, and nurtured, anti-Semitism; today, anti-Semitism nurtures and prolongs the life of an aged and declining anti-Judaism. At all events, anti-Judaic theories today have little, if any, recognizable effect on the situation of the State of Israel in Christian thinking; anti-Semitism in Christians does. A complicating factor, moreover, has been the development, in recent centuries, of a non-Christian, even anti-religious, anti-Semitism which has proven to be a most dangerous and intractable kind. Ominously, it lies outside the reach of Christian or Jewish influence.

Christian philo-Semitism contrasts greatly with its counterpart. First, in size. Though present from the beginning of the Common Era and never fully without notable representatives in every period, it never became the dominant attitude in the Churches. Far from it, it remained the preserve of a precious few who were able to dissociate themselves from

4. The term "philo-Semitism" is used here in the sense of rational positive regard for Jews and Judaism, not of a strict correlative of anti-Semitism, which is an irrational and pathological state.

the pressures of majority prejudices and mythologies and to reroot themselves in what they believed to be the true inspiration of their faith. Their function was to hold aloft the torch of Jewish-Christian friendship and understanding until the dawn of a better era of brotherhood arrived.

From the start, the advent of Zionism worked upon the anti- and philo-Semitism of Christians. In the latter case, a Christian Zionism⁵ was the result; in the former, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and an anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic literature replete with the names of Christians. A new catalyst, of positive and negative valence, was on the scene: Christian attitudes towards things Jewish could no longer remain what they were.

The question of equating anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism has been well aired in recent years. Many Christians, leaning heavily on the grounds of Arab rights, have called for a complete separation between both states of mind. It is a separation that is hard to defend, even granted that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are not synonymous or identical, and that it is possible to be anti-Zionist yet not anti-Semitic. These logical distinctions made, as we move into the realm of existential relations, the gap between these negativities so approaches zero as to make them almost coterminous. Concrete experience in dealing with them is the only safe guide here. Observations of sufficient depth will reveal that, in almost all cases, the anti-Zionist happens also to be an anti-Semite. The difficulty resides in the unconsciousness of present-day anti-Semitism. Since it is unconscious, it is necessarily denied, even by the anti-Zionist, who generally shows more of its characteristics than does the run-of-the-mill anti-Semite.

The fact remains: the success of Zionism and of the State of Israel has impinged vigorously on the consciousness (and unconscious) of the Christian anti-Semite and, indeed, on the Christian consciousness itself. This was not without effect on the beginnings of the Jewish-Christian dialogue; they were delayed. Nor was it without influence on the dialogue once begun. A Christian reluctance to discuss Israel in the dialogue hampered the dialogue's progress, especially in the wake of the Six-Day War.

On the other hand, the same realities have constellated in Christian philo-Semites new energies which have produced a mutation of historic dimensions in Jewish-Christian relations. Christian Zionism, once evangelically motivated, has entered a mature stage of genuine appreciation for Israel in itself. Thanks to it, the dialogue since 1967 has overcome its anti-Zionist reluctance. More, of late, the Jewish-Christian collaboration has imparted an impetus to the ecumenical movement as a whole, and it appears at present to proceed at a more rapid pace than the latter.

The effects that I have been attempting to describe in these pages can

5. Zionism here is used in its widest sense of favoring or aiding Jews in their return to their homeland. For an analysis of the concept of Christian Zionism, see Halpern, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 251-52. Christian Zionism has evolved further since Halpern's analysis and perhaps needs further defining.

be exemplified in many developments, of which only a few must suffice for mention. Official Christian attitudes toward Jews and toward Israel have improved. The so-called "silence of the Churches" has diminished from war to war, from the Great War to the Six-Day War to the Yom Kippur War. The phrase seems no longer appropriate. Meanwhile, Church documents have begun to include positive references to the State of Israel.⁶ More impressive has been the proliferation of individuals and private agencies devoted to the cause of Jewish-Christian understanding. These have greatly outstripped institutional progress. In the whole field of Jewish-Christian relations, obviously a corner has been turned.

It is a happy turn of history that the State of Israel and the cause of Jewish-Christian friendship have aided one another at critical moments, and have grown stronger from it. This is a unique chapter in interfaith relations that is far from complete.

6. Cf. "Pastoral Orientations with Regard to the Attitudes of Christians toward Judaism" of the French Episcopal Conference for Relations with Judaism (April, 1973); also, "Statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations: On the Occasion of the Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, No. 4" (Nov., 1975). Statements of Protestant denomination have also begun to include positive references to Israel.

The Achievements and Trials of Interfaith

ALICE and ROY ECKARDT

INTERFAITH HAS WORKED QUITE INFLUENTIALLY in the United States. The Christian contribution to it has been made possible by a creative avoidance of theological absolutism on the one side, and of “liberal” universalism on the other side. Within right-wing absolutism, which presumes to possess final truth, and left-wing universalism, which negates the particularities of human life, there reside twin threats to interfaith amity. We shall elaborate upon this state of affairs.

The role of the Christian church in the interfaith movement could come about only through a transcending of certain teachings that traditionally ensured anti-Judaism and even anti-Semitism. Only in the measure that historic allegations of Jewish perfidy and ignorance were displaced in the church by the norms of love of neighbor and social justice, could Christians enter into interfaith relations as true partners of non-Christians. Significantly, this could occur in the measure that the high moral demands of prophetic Judaism overtook the Christian conscience. Those of us Christians who, as young people, were destined to pledge ourselves to interfaith amity now look back with grateful hearts to pastors who initiated us into the marvelous company of Amos of Tekoa, Isaiah of Jerusalem, and Jesus of Nazareth. Furthermore, the American churches—Protestant and Catholic—were markedly influenced by ideals of religious pluralism and liberal relativism, forces that counteracted Christian absolutism and triumphalism. A most effective antidote to the intolerance that has dogged historic Christianity is a democratic social order that contravenes religio-political tyranny over human beings. Fortunately, our land, despite its Christian majority, is not a Christian country in any theocratic or political sense. It is a secular-pluralist country, carrying in its Constitution and its ethos built-in protections against Christian and other forms of religious tyranny.

Theologically expressed, the above historical-moral achievements may be identified as the judgment of God upon the idolatries and sin of the very people who claim to be special representatives of his truth.

II

The attainments of interfaith contain vital lessons for today and for the future. It is no accident that right-wing Christians have played a very minor role, and often, instead, an obstructionist one, in interfaith understanding and friendship. Thus, Christian Fundamentalism comprises a

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major and continuing means for perpetuating anti-Jewish influences. This is not due to any calculated design; these people are as decent as anybody else. The cause of their affliction is a tenacious refusal to abandon a non-critical, literalist rendering of the New Testament. In 1936, the Nazis circulated a children's picture book featuring the watchword "*Der Vater der Juden ist der Teufel*," the direct source of which is John 8:44. Christian Fundamentalism remains a naive but dangerous companion of Nazi ideology. Any assertion of "the divine inspiration of all Scripture," a pillar of Fundamentalism, cannot escape a proclivity to anti-Semitism.

Christians and Jews dedicated to intergroup amity and human justice will lament the contemporary, massive growth of "evangelical" and "born again" Christianity. This development comprises a return to the very absolutisms that the Christian interfaith movement had managed to surmount. The new "evangelicalism" is spiritual retrogression, a weighty blow to the moral advance of American religion. "Christian Yellow Pages" bigotry is the natural consequence of the exclusivist we-they mentality of "born again" religion.

In addition to its insufferably individualistic piety and its consequent failure to work out a responsible social ethic, "born again" Christianity is a relapse into fateful forms of unreason. The current turn to "evangelicalism" is part and parcel of a social irrationalism that is regnant as well in astrology, attestations of the paranormal, and the rise of neo-Nazism. Flights into unreason furnish an atmosphere out of which destructive social and political movements come. Words of Paul Kurtz, originally directed against "the new nonsense" of paranormal claims (Uri Geller *et al*) are applicable to the new Christian "evangelicalism":

There is always the danger that once irrationality grows, it will spill over into other areas. There is no guarantee that a society so infected by unreason will be resistant to . . . the most virulent programs of dangerous ideological sects (*Time*, 12 Dec. 1977).

The spectacle, today, of thousands of Americans gathered at religious "revivals" ("Christ circuses," one dissident calls them) bears an unhappy kinship to the mass hysteria of the Nazi meetings that ended with the slaughter of Jews. Whenever religious absolutism joins forces with human unreason, the corpus of human justice is menaced.

The most we can do here is to see to it that Christian "evangelicalism"—freedom for which is, of course, warranted by the Constitution—is kept from achieving forms of political power and influence that are disastrous for freedom.

III

It is instructive to apply the moral principles of interfaith to questions of human dignity and human right.

Sometimes it is countered that “evangelical” Christianity has learned its lesson and is now rediscovering the social dimensions of faith. This asseveration is being made by “born again” apologists themselves.

The fatal difficulty is that the mating of social responsibility with religious absolutism engenders a flawed political theology. A perfect illustration is the new “Christian Zionism.” True, current “evangelical” support for Israel constitutes a vital judgment against indifference among Christian “liberals” to the fate and well-being of Jewry. But the fact stands that the ideology of “Christian Zionism” is an imperialistic one (not unlike the concept behind such impossibly juxtaposed words as “Jewish Christology”). “Christian Zionism” embodies the theologizing of politics. The State of Israel is theologized into a preparation for such a religious eventuality as the “Second Coming.” “Christian Zionism” is not genuinely political; that is to say, it does not, and cannot, acknowledge Jewishness on the latter’s own terms. An earlier Christianity claimed that the dispersion of Jewry from its land was divine punishment. The “Christian Zionists” teach the obverse of the identical notion. To assert that the restoring of Jewish-Israeli sovereignty comprises a special act of divine grace is acceptable, to be sure, as an instance of religious-confessional celebration. But we can never permit such testimony to slide over into the political domain. The stumbling block is the necessary and just intrusion of the category of the future. For, if a political interpretation of the reconstituting of the Jewish commonwealth must be that God has moved to restore Israel today, thus revealing His mercy, it follows that the destruction of Israel tomorrow would have to be comprehended as an act of divine disfavor, one that manifests God’s judgment.

The only licit non-Jewish authentication of Jewish sovereignty (or, for that matter, Jewish authentication) is an insistence upon the historical, juridical, and moral validity of Israel. Any attributing of special right, divine or other, to the State of Israel, constitutes a most fateful menace to the future of the Jewish body politic. Ironically, the theologizing of politics, whose advocates may fancy that they are fostering human dignity, constitutes, in truth, a formidable assault upon that dignity. For, in the sphere of international affairs, the natural reaction to any protagonist’s claim of *divine* right, and a wholly legitimate reaction, is recourse to political sanctions and power, not excluding the waging of war, in the name of *human* right. In alternate terminology, the creating of the Third Jewish Commonwealth has to be demythologized of any idea of the beginnings of, or the coming of, ultimate redemption.

The foregoing argument comprises one application to the socio-political domain of the identical norms that have traditionally guided the American interfaith movement and dialogue. Each partner is possessed of equal dignity; neither is possessed of special right.

IV

Threats to interfaith amity today are hardly the monopoly of “evangelical” triumphalists. An equal threat comes from the Christian theological left—a more subtle threat, because the left so often masquerades in the name of shared social values and human cooperation (whereas many Christian rightists are at least honest enough to make plain that, since they “possess” the truth, they are under no obligation to have concourse with the unwashed and the unfaithful).

The liberal relativism that has contributed so praiseworthily to inter-group harmony is, unfortunately, counteracted by forms of “liberal” universalism, particularly within the Protestant corpus. This viewpoint is typified today by radical anti-Israeli and even anti-Semitic trends within the Quaker movement. Fortunately, the “Friends” do not marshal decisive political influence. The hypocrisy of some of these people is illustrated in their concern over Jewish “nationalism,” but not over other relevant nationalisms. Thus, one Quaker professor asserts that Israel is to be “evaluated” and her future “determined” by her “practice or lack of practice of justice, mercy, and righteousness.”¹ The revealing element in this preaching is not what is being demanded of Israel, but what is not being demanded of her foes. Evidently, policies of hostility among the Arab states toward Israel as well as toward various minorities within Arab countries, are not unjust, unmerciful, or unrighteous, and, hence, remain perfectly acceptable. That this professor should refuse to apply his Quaker-pacifist demands to the Arabs suggests that his hidden purposes are not, in fact, the fostering of peace, but, instead, the dissolution of an Israel turned into defenselessness through the implementing of his brand of “Christian” perfectionism. Significantly, his apologetic, originally appearing in a Quaker journal, has been republished by an Arab-front group, “Americans for Middle East Understanding.”

The great disillusionment of Jews with the Christian community in 1967 and subsequent years has been eased somewhat by recent evidences of support and sympathy, e.g., by “Christians Concerned For Israel” and by numbers of Christian “evangelicals.” These examples represent implicit and explicit opposition to Christian “liberal” universalism.

A further illustration of Christian menaces to interfaith amity, and, in light of its source, a weighty one, is a recent pronouncement by William P. Thompson, President of the National Council of Churches, who expresses total agreement with the view that the crux of the Middle East problem is the cause of the Palestinians (*The New York Times*, 4 Dec. 1977). Thompson’s prejudices are made clear by his failure to include a second all-decisive issue in the Middle East: the security of the State of Israel. This latest judgment from an NCC official is simply one more in a long series from that ecumenical agency, expressed positions that have done a great deal to jeopardize Christian-Jewish friendship.

1. Calvin Keene, “Prophecy and Modern Israel,” *The Link*, X, 3 (Summer 1977): 1–3.

V

A special lesson of the Nazi Holocaust, particularly for Jews, just as, one would hope, for perfectionist Christians, is that without group security and political power, a people will sooner or later be dead. This realization has itself helped Jews get over a certain minority outlook of "by-your-leave." Bernice S. Tannenbaum, President of Hadassah, recently spoke for all Jews (and all Americans) when she wrote:

As free people living in a free country, we take directives from no one. When we react, we do so out of shared priorities and common destiny, not at the behest of any government, including that of Israel. Independence also means independence from rote subservience to whichever administration happens to occupy the White House at a given time (*The New York Times*, 13 Nov. 1977).

The Jewish community in our land is learning that, if competing and conflicting self-interest is integral to the American ethos itself, there is no moral justification whatsoever for forbidding Jewish forms of self-interest while condoning other forms. This principle applies as much within interfaith encounters as anywhere else.

Some Jewish leaders may have been troubled by the lack of interest of many Jews in interfaith. They reason that this condition reflects a withdrawal, an inward-looking trend that is not good for the future of Diaspora Jewry. To the extent that the new independence of Jewry reflects a collective "coming of age," this subjectivist development is not to be lamented. However, in the Holocaust it became evident that intimate relationships between Jews and gentiles (Christian or non-believing) were a precondition of protests on behalf of Jews and of self-sacrificing endeavors to save them. Separation and non-communication of Jews and non-Jews do nothing to challenge attitudes among the latter. Today, contacts with the non-Jewish community may often be painful for Jews, and one can understand and sympathize with decisions to draw back. But is it in the ultimate welfare of Jews to do so? To whom does one turn in the event of trouble and possible persecution?

VI

The Holocaust, originally an unspeakable trauma for Jews vis-à-vis the Christian world, is today a subject of shared concern, interest, and study within interfaith circles. In June of 1976, the Board of Homeland Ministries of the American Baptist Churches agreed that its congregations ought to observe the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust (*Yom ha-Shoah*); it now appears on all American Baptist church calendars.

Conferences on the Holocaust and university courses on that subject can have a powerful impact upon human attitudes and motivations. It is essential that these efforts not ignore the Christian contribution to, and complicity in, the "Final Solution." It is equally essential that they not overlook Christian efforts to make amends, including revolutionary trends within contemporary Christian thinking.

Franklin H. Littell's valiant efforts to sensitize Christians to the Holocaust, as also to neo-Nazism and the cause of the State of Israel, are a great lesson for all. He identifies the Holocaust as one of two "alpine events" for the twentieth-century church (the other being the reestablishment of the Third Jewish Commonwealth). The Christian decisiveness of the Holocaust, to Littell, arises from the truth that the Nazi movement was made possible and was carried forward by an apostate Christendom. To this truth, we must add the fact that much of Christendom's contribution to Nazism was not a matter of apostasy but stemmed directly from an anti-Jewish tradition central to the church's teachings.

Out of a penitent recognition of the destructive power of the church's "teaching of contempt" (Jules Isaac), numbers of thinkers are giving themselves to a radical reform of Christian doctrine. A major thrust of the new thinking is the identifying of the Christian community as adopted brothers and sisters within the Jewish-Israel family, the total opposite of traditional Christian supersessionism and triumphalism.

VII

We cannot overestimate the spiritual and moral benefits that Christians receive from ties to Jewry. Of infinite value for Christians is the weaving together of life and faith on the part of the Jewish community, an achievement that many Christians are found to welcome with a kind of unbelieving joy. It is most essential for Christians to be reminded that human ideas concerning God need not be an obstacle to moral obligations. This they are often enabled to see through their association with Jews. The sense of community, so fundamental to Jewishness, involves an especially valuable lesson, both in its own right and as a means of counteracting Christian individualistic piety.

All in all, the American interfaith movement of late years has gained a maturity that carries it far beyond the platitude and the pious gesture; today we have become much more ready to come to terms, candidly and reflectively, with the forces and pressures that divide us, but, also, with those that unite us.

An insistence upon the divine judgment on all human claims to truth, and a declaration of the legitimacy of discrete collective entities as elements in the good creation of God, comprise the very soul of interfaith endeavor. Here we discern part of the greatness of the American "experiment" and, indeed, something of the peculiar contribution of this country to human solidarity. This way of believing and behaving rests, in turn, upon certain religious foundations, including, especially, prophetic Judaism and a Christianity that, against its own idolatrous absolutisms, has somehow succeeded in carrying forward that prophetism.

The achievements and the trials of interfaith are beautifully summed up in an injunction of the Kotzker Rov: "Worry about your own soul and the next person's body, and not the reverse."

Facing the Truth

ELIEZER BERKOVITS

LOOKING AT THE SITUATION OF THE JEWISH people today, it is extremely doubtful that the Jewish-Christian dialoguing, which gained in intensity with the Vatican II declaration on the Jews, has any significant results to show in the area of real issues. The Jewish people today stand alone in the world; more alone than since the days of Western civilization's Hitler era. Anti-Semitism has been on the increase in the United States. The State of Israel is isolated. One need not concern oneself too much with the obscene farce of Israel's condemnation, enacted with such consistency by a morally bankrupt United Nations. Most of the most prestigious Christian intellectual and theological publications are witness to the inability of understanding the plight of the Jew and of the Jewish people. It would seem that nothing pleases the Christian psyche more than to discover reasons for righteous indignation against Judaism and the Jewish people. It is strange that, after such world-wide success, Christianity still needs the Jews as "*testes iniquitatis suae et veritatis nostrae*." It still needs the failing of the Jew in order to be able to feel safe in its own truth.

In the light of the real issues, the Jewish-Christian dialogue has been a singular failure. It has failed because the Jews as well as the Christians who are engaged in it do not have the moral courage to face the truth about Jewish-Christian relationships. The matter on hand is not one of differences in creed and dogma; the task is not to further mutual theological understanding of religious differences. The fundamental issue is the meaning of the Jewish experience in the midst of Christendom all through history. The first truth to note is the realization that, in its effect upon the life of the Jew and the Jewish people, Christianity's New Testament has been the most dangerous anti-Semitic tract in history. Its hatred-charged diatribes against the "Pharisees" and the Jews have poisoned the hearts and minds of millions and millions of Christians for almost two millenia now. We are not unfamiliar with the more recent attempts by well-meaning Christian theologians to interpret those passages of venom against the Jews in a theologically more acceptable sense. One should, however, not overlook the fact that theologians are a very small company, whose ideas have very little effect upon the emotions and character formation of the masses. No matter what the deeper theological meaning of the hate passages against the Jews might be, in the history of

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the Jewish people the New Testament lent its inspiring support to oppression, persecution and mass murder of an intensity and duration that were unparalleled in the entire history of man's degradation. Without Christianity's New Testament, Hitler's *Mein Kampf* could never have been written. In its effect upon the attitude of Western man toward the Jew, this New Testament has been the spiritual progenitor of a vast library of international hate literature. To face this truth is the first condition of a meaningful Jewish-Christian dialogue. Is Christianity morally capable of doing it? And what is it able to do about it?

Once again, what has to be faced is not the need for theological understanding and religious tolerance, but the experience of the Jewish people at Christian hands. The story is well known—of discrimination, oppression, persecution, expulsion, pogroms and massacres. Christianity has practiced genocide upon the Jewish people for many centuries. Without that Christian practice, and its self-righteous justification, the gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz and Treblinka would not have been possible. The theme is not how to live in peace with each other, notwithstanding credal differences. The fundamental theme is not religion and dogma, but inhumanity and barbarism of an intensity, consistency and duration unique in human history, which has been inflicted upon the Jewish people by Christianity. Before anything else one has to face the truth of Christian criminality against the Jewish people.

Needless to say, that justification of this criminality by Christian theology as a God-pleasing deed is only too well known and, to this day, believed in by innumerable votaries of the religion of love. All this suffering is being visited upon the Jews as direct punishment for their rejection of Jesus as man and god. It does not require a great deal of intellectual acumen to see that what has been done by Christianity to the Jewish people was not done by God but by human beings.

The truth, of course, is that this so-called theology about suffering inflicted upon human beings by human beings as witness to the iniquity of the Jews and the truth of Christianity is nothing but over-bearing Christian conceit that equates its own will and dark desires with the will of the Almighty. To ascribe Christian inhumanity against the Jewish people through the ages to the will of God is the ultimate blasphemy.

This bitter truth has to be faced by Jews and Christians alike; otherwise, all this dialoguing remains futile. Jews often think that it is bad politics to bring up the issue. One should not rock the boat of Christian-Jewish *rapprochement*. Others again believe that what is at stake is open-mindedness toward another religion; as if the issue were between liberalism and orthodoxy, tolerance and intolerance. The issue is a universal demand of the moral conscience, i.e., not to disregard inhumanity even when practiced against oneself. Inhumanity has to be recognized for what it is, and then met. Jews who, for the sake of the pleasantries of the Jewish-Christian dialogue, are ready to overlook almost two millenia of

Jewish suffering at Christian hands, agree that an act of ethical dishonesty may well be the basis for an encounter between Jew and Christian in search of a better understanding. They are bound to be disappointed. Nor do they render any service to Christianity by silence on what really stands between us—not creed and dogma, but, first of all, a river of tears and blood running through the centuries. To acknowledge it, face it, and deal with it ought to be even more a Christian than a Jewish concern. The crime against the Jewish people is the cancer at the very heart of Christianity. Anti-Semitism is a mild word to describe it. It covers up much more than it reveals. What we are dealing with is neither prejudice nor dislike of fellow human beings; it is not even hatred in the normal sense of the word. None of these can explain the sadistic passion with which Jews have been persecuted, entire communities mercilessly annihilated, generation after generation, almost through the entire course of Christian history, ever since, with the help of Constantine's sword, Christianity became triumphant. The Christian crime against the Jewish people is beyond the natural; it is demonic. It is the devil's laughter at all those nice Christian affirmations about turning the other cheek and loving one's enemy. It is the Christian rebellion against Christianity. It is the vengeance of him who is unredeemed who is called upon to act and live as if he had already been redeemed and saved. All this satanic rebellion has been visited on the Jew as the source of all of that intolerable imposition upon the instinctual life of pagans. For was not Jesus a Jew!

If the Jewish-Christian dialogue is to be honest, meaningful and lead to the professed results, it ought, before anything else, to deal with the following questions:

What is to be done about the anti-Jewish venom that is still being filtered into the hearts of the believers from the pages of the Christian New Testament?

What is to be done about the Christian crime against the Jewish people?

How to eliminate this satanic rebellion against all the values of human existence?

How to atone for it?

It would be most helpful if, for a while, rabbis and priests, theologians and community leaders, would leave God alone and concentrate on man.

Jewish-Christian Relationships in America

SOLOMON S. BERNARDS

IT CAN SAFELY BE STATED THAT, IN THE PAST half-century, there has been more genuine, measurable progress in Jewish-Christian relations in the United States than at any other time and place in history. Perhaps—and this is a provisional, hesitant judgment on my part—if similar conditions of openness, interchange and access had existed between Jews and Christians in continental Europe before World War II, at least some of the horror, brutality and suffering of the *Shoah* might have been avoided. Let us draw the appropriate lessons, then, and not make the same mistakes again.

The initiative in the elimination of injustice has ever been the responsibility of the victim. Who but the target of oppression would make its eradication a first priority? So it has been with us. It is Jews who directly and assertively took the initial and continuing steps in proposing and implementing programs to improve relationships with Gentiles. Only in recent years have some American Christian agencies designated staff people with full or, more usually, part-time responsibilities in this area.

For the handful of us in the Jewish community who specialize in Jewish-Christian relationships, it has been gratifying to note the increased personal involvement of virtually all sectors of the Christian and Jewish denominational groups in the interfaith enterprise. It is not merely a few well-known Catholic and Protestant church officials, editors, academicians and clergy who appear at interfaith gatherings with predictable regularity. It is not merely the small group of Reform and Conservative rabbis, and a coterie of avidly interested laity, mainly from secular backgrounds, who participate in these meetings. Our own, formerly withdrawn Orthodox Jewish brethren—the scholars, rabbis, and a few of the laity—are beginning to accept invitations. On the Christian side, it is the long-quiescent Lutherans, Southern Baptists, Evangelicals, and Eastern Orthodox who now take active roles in these projects. In addition, and most importantly, to a degree never existing before, doors of accessibility have opened to the highest ecclesiastical officials, to church-affiliated colleges and universities, and to theological seminaries.

To be sure, there has not always been progress, nor has the quality of the dialogue always been exemplary. To this day, there are areas of the country where the interchange is still at the *alef-bet* stage. At the same time,

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in other circles there is a level of sophistication, frankness and thorough grappling with issues of the thorniest delicacy, which is wonderful to behold.

I propose to present two aspects of these interfaith contacts: (a) the maturation of the Jewish-Christian dialogue in the past fifty years—and (b) at least a partial answer to the question of how this progress can be translated into permanent changes in the Christian envisagements of Jews and Judaism.

The characteristic, distinctive programs of interfaith amity during the 1930s, 40s and early 50s—that is to say, for at least half of the period under consideration—were informational in nature. The “round table,” the trios of Catholic, Jewish and Protestant clergy who toured the country during February—Brotherhood Month—dramatized the simple fact that Christians and Jews could talk to each other without the atmosphere becoming that of a medieval disputation. It was a non-threatening format. The content usually involved descriptions of each one’s credo, and a stress on the need for brotherhood under the slogan, “cooperation without compromise.” Controversial theological topics were avoided.

These “brotherhood” meetings responded to a genuine need among Christians, especially the clergy, for authentic information about Jews and Judaism, especially the Judaism of ancient days, the Judaism of Jesus. Lacking the perspective of Rabbinic development, Christians tended to associate the religious life of Jesus with traditions of much later periods in Judaism. Of course, this interest had a very long history. From the post-apostolic period and on, the tradition of “walking in the footsteps of Jesus” had developed in relationship to the Holy Land. Now that the Jewishness of Jesus was being stressed, discovering it became something of a passion. The parables of the Hassidic teachers, as delineated particularly by Martin Buber, and those in the Midrash generally, were searched out and associated with Jesus.

Jews, too, found the expositions of Christian theology and rituals enlightening, and quite a contrast to the oversimplifications and shoddy folklore which, with the gulf separating Jews from their neighbors, had stereotyped Christianity in many sectors of the Jewish community.

In the informational area, Jewish agencies and individuals undertook an extensive publications program. The pamphlet, “Your Neighbor Celebrates,” and the Kit of Jewish Religious Articles are among the all-time best sellers in the ADL catalogue.

Another approach, which continues to this day, is the series of Institutes on Judaism for Christian clergy, devised under Reform auspices. These programs usually consist of one or two sessions, at which Reform faculty lecture on Jewish beliefs and practices. In addition, Reform rabbis visit church groups, colleges, and seminaries, and offer to libraries sets of volumes on Jews and Judaism, compliments of the project sponsors, the Jewish Chautauqua Society.

It is a serious question, and a debatable one, whether information, *per se*, about Judaism and Jews can modify or change deeply engrained derogations which have their source in millennial theological doctrines. For open-minded people, authentic insights into the Jewish religion and the Jewish people can be corrective and helpful. But for those Christians who are steeped in traditional envisagements of Judaism, nurtured by theological orientation, the information may well be deflected and have little emotional or intellectual impact.

In the 1950s, the momentum of the "round tables" petered out; the programs had become repetitive and boring. Jews and Christians interested in interfaith felt ready to move to the live issues in the social domain, the active struggles against anti-Black, anti-Jewish bigotry and discrimination. It was the period of the Jewish-Christian, Jewish-Black alliances in the landmark court cases and federal and state anti-discriminatory legislation. The interfaith dialogues focused on "common concerns," a Protestant phrase, or "the common good," a Catholic slogan.

At the same time, Jewish agencies directed their attention to the church-school and its teachings about Jews and Judaism. It was discovered that, despite progress in brotherhood, there were shocking distortions and contemptuous evaluations of Judaism and Jews in church-school texts. The hostile attitudes stemmed from the portrayal of Jews as the enemies of Jesus, who mocked and reviled him, and were directly responsible for his execution; they were connected with the disparagement of the Pharisees, the Law, the Jewish system of salvation and grace through the *mizvot*, and the charges that Jews had betrayed their own sacred texts, either wilfully or through moral blindness, in rejecting Jesus.

The tasks of dialogue and corrective action in these areas came closer to the ancient and living Christian animus against Jews and, thus, were delicate, painful and difficult. To confront Christian educators with assertions in their textbooks which were offensive and partly or wholly untrue, about Jews and Judaism, and to persuade them to modify or often completely to recast the material, involved a long, patient, sensitizing, educational effort which had to be left in the hands of specialists. It was necessary to offer criticism and suggestions while not casting aspersions or impugning integrity. It was essential to stress that Christians were being asked, not to whittle down or compromise their faith, but to cooperate in the process of self-purification from the tragic residue of the fierce in-family fight which has lain imbedded in the New Testament. For literalist Christians, to whom the words of the gospels were inherently true, the problems involved in modification and change were quite painful. For the middle-of-the-road and more liberal educators, the questions were handled in a gracious, extremely gratifying cooperative spirit.

Almost always, there were the counter-questions. What do Jews say about Jesus and Christianity in their textbooks? What about the *minim*

prayer in the *Amidah*? Isn't there anti-Christianism in Jewish preaching and teaching, and what are Jews doing about it?

The magnitude of the problems involved in church school re-education was nowhere better illustrated than in the question of re-training church-school teachers in the use of the modified texts. For better or worse, most such teachers in the Protestant communions are volunteers, whose principal qualifications are piety and deep devotion to the church, but who, unfortunately, lack professional education, and receive minimum on-the-job training. Thus, such teachers would tend to ignore modified approaches to Judaism, and continue to instruct as they were taught in their childhood and youth. Programmatic efforts to re-orient these critically important people have been only partially successful, because they will not devote more time to their teaching chores than they have to.

In the mid-60s, two concurrent, unrelated events took place which served to propel Christian-Jewish discussions into a new orbit—a series of church pronouncements, and a book. From 1962 to 1965, Vatican II was convened, and one of the important items on its agenda was the formulation of a new statement by the Roman Catholic church on its relations with Judaism and Jews, against the backdrop of the destruction of six million Jews in the midst of Christian Europe, half of which was Catholic. Various texts were debated, rejected and sent back to committee. In the midst of the bitter wrangling about these texts, the Lutherans met in April, 1964, in Denmark and formulated a statement on the Church and the Jewish People which expressed deep contrition for the sufferings of Jews under Christendom, asked the forgiveness of the Jewish people, and pledged unceasing concern for the pursuit of improved Jewish-Christian relations. The Vatican II declaration on the Jews, approved in 1965, dealt with the deicide charge, exonerated Jews, and instructed the agencies of the Church to draw up Guidelines to implement a new relationship of amity and cooperation. The Vatican document, in particular, because it was proclaimed amidst world-wide publicity, had an immediate beneficial effect on Jewish-Christian relations.

The book referred to, *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*, by Charles E. Glock and Rodney Stark, was a sociological study of the religious roots of American anti-Semitism, and was based on survey research of a sample of churchgoers in the San Francisco Bay area. It appeared in 1965, and sent shock-waves through the American Christian leadership. It revealed that an uncomfortably large minority of American Christians held on to the age-old theological disparagements of Jews which nurtured and reinforced current anti-Semitic attitudes. Two beliefs, in particular, turned out to be crucial: the Jews' culpability for Jesus' crucifixion for which they could not be forgiven unless they accepted Christianity, and Jewish suffering as God's way of punishing them for rejecting Christianity. The findings of this volume forced open an examination of core theological issues

on the part of all sectors of the Christian educational structure, and the debate still goes on.

Jewish-Christian discussions were now ready for a grappling with the most sensitive religious perspectives of the New Testament and the later Christian tradition, about how Judaism and Jews were understood and appraised. Did Judaism continue to have legitimacy, integrity, and a future? Were Jews superseded, fulfilled, completed by Christianity? Did Jews betray their own sacred writing in rejecting Christianity? Is it possible for a deeply committed Christian to affirm his belief in Jesus without, in the same breath, implying "and the Jews be damned," as Rosemary Radford Ruether has suggested?

On the most mature and responsible levels, interfaith consultations, seminars and colloquia have brought together Jews and Christians to examine and explore the basic questions which have divided them. The climate can never be that of a debate or a disputation. Abrasive, accusatory language is out of bounds. There must be an atmosphere of "no hidden agendas," there must be trust, respect, restraint, sensitivity, calm and considerateness. There must be a spirit of friendly inquiry, and a shedding of defensiveness. Under these conditions, even the most delicate, painful and embarrassing questions can be talked about constructively. Few answers or solutions may be found to the vexing, perplexing problems which perennially surface at these discussions, but the sense of candor and mutual concern, the feeling that Jews and Christians have together wrestled with matters which have caused such anguish over the ages and have managed, at the very least, to understand these matters a little better, has enhanced mutual respect and mutual trust.

Turning to the question of how to bring about permanent changes in the perceptions and attitudes of American Christians towards Jews and Judaism, let me say that, at first flush, the task seems an impossible one. The bare figures stagger the imagination: there are 110-120 million affiliated church people in the United States, with around 250,000 clergy, who serve some 250 large and small Christian denominations. Even if the Jewish community were possessed of resources fifty-fold of what is presently allocated to interfaith work, the challenges would be insuperable.

Yet, on a modest, systematic, regular scale, it has been possible to develop a program of education, orientation and dialogue which has had a substantial effect. The focus of my attention for the past decade and more has been the teachers and scholars at the theological schools of the land, and the religion teachers at Christian-affiliated and public-sponsored colleges and universities. The reasoning behind this program is as follows: if the teachers—the mentors of the future clergy, scholars and lay leaders in the American Christian community—could be attracted to educational opportunities to study Jews and Judaism intensively for short periods of time, changes in their perceptions and attitudes would inevitably follow. They would return to their teaching and research tasks

with enriched appreciation, with enhanced awareness, and with a sense of priority about giving the appropriate visibility to a fair, authentic presentation of Judaism and Jews wherever this was necessary in their teaching. If the teaching approaches were to change, it is inevitable that the students would be affected. In the long run, generations of professional and lay Christian leadership would be touched with a new empathy and appreciation of the Jewish people and the Jewish religion.

Reaching the teachers at the theological schools required inordinate patience and persuasiveness. The stress was that doing justice to the study of Jews and Judaism was correcting a historic wrong. Furthermore, it was in Christianity's own self-interest to purge itself of the "teaching of contempt" about Jews. In addition, gained insight into authentic Judaism would enhance and enrich the understanding of the Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible), the New Testament, and the theological doctrines of the church. Besides, in the examination of the Christian church's doctrines and teachings about Jews and Judaism, it was never our intention to suggest the expurgation of the New Testament passages offensive to Jews.

To all who attended the seminars and Institutes on Jews, Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations, which were part of this program, we made plain that four-day or even ten-day seminars would not make them experts on Judaism. Rather, it was our aim to provide them with enough information to challenge them to continue their study of Judaism, and to move them to interleaf into their ongoing courses references to, and the study of, aspects of Judaism, wherever relevant.

We were fortunate in obtaining the cooperation of leading colleges, universities and theological schools to host these seminars. Two eminent institutions, Princeton Theological Seminary and Vanderbilt Divinity School, have annually co-sponsored these academic offerings, which are open to faculty, doctoral students and academically-connected clergy. The format of these seminars allows for the widest kind of discussion and sharing of ideas. While most of the people in attendance are Christians, we have welcomed Jewish academicians who have felt the need for the kind of enrichment and supplementation that is provided.

The teachers who are invited to lecture at these seminars are, in the main, Jews, although at one institution we invariably invite a Christian scholar to be part of the team. Subjects dealt with in the formal lectures include the whole range of Jewish learning and Christian-Jewish relations—Bible, Talmudic literature, medieval thought, mysticism, modern Jewish thought, American Jewish community, and, in recent years, aspects of the Holocaust experience. Two themes are invariably dealt with in informal discussions—the State of Israel and its central relationship to present-day Jewish life, and the phenomenon of anti-Semitism and its religious roots.

Christian scholars and teachers who attend these seminars are, generally, friends of the State of Israel. In fact, most of them have visited the

land at least once, and some are engaged in conducting student study tours and taking part in archeological digs on a regular basis. They are very anxious to discuss Israel in an informal atmosphere, but they do object to long, pro-Zionist speeches. (Shall we ever learn not to expect Christians to become Zionists, nor to regard any Christian who will not consent to sign a petition or advertisement as anti-Semitic?)

The sudden burgeoning of interest in the Holocaust on the part of Christian academicians is a complex phenomenon, meriting detailed examination and analysis. Courses on the Holocaust are springing up on almost every college and university campus, and teachers have to be found to teach them. I am convinced that this interest is only the beginning of a long-term trend.

In dealing with anti-Semitism, we underscore the fact that, in some circles of Christendom, the tragic story of what happened to Jews in Christian countries is one of the best-kept secrets. Students preparing for the ministry receive training which is often quite narrow and restricted; the Jews, *per se*, and Judaism, *per se*, never appear on the agenda. We encourage seminar participants to teach the whole sorry history, to "let it all hang out," as the saying goes, as the most appropriate kind of self-confrontation with this evil which has plagued the Christian world for the past two millenia.

We structure workshop sessions in which we provide model syllabi and curricula, shared with us by Christian and Jewish academicians, to point the way to the kind of resource materials and supplementary books which could help make possible the visibility of Jews and Judaism. Often, novels and short stories on the Jewish experience are the most effective.

During seminar days, we socialize in the evening, sing Hebrew melodies, and in general, maintain the atmosphere of a *Kumsitz*. There are personal interest, warmth, and a mutuality of aims and concerns, which are shared during the informal gatherings.

A scholar who, through personal experience, has greatly admired the impact of these seminars, has called them "Johnny Appleseed" programs which have planted the seeds of a new envisagement and appreciation of Jews and Judaism in academic institutions all over the United States.

When a Holocaust survivor tells me, as he has, that the interfaith work I am doing is futile because "Christianity cannot exist without anti-Semitism," I do not choose to respond. The fires of the "kingdom of night" have penetrated his life deeply—I can only hope that in time he will regain perspective. But when others in our midst judge this work to be a waste of time, money and resources—a diversion from the "real" tasks of Jewish life, I answer: either they are frightened by the prospect of better relations between Christians and Jews on the deplorable, utterly false premise that Judaism cannot continue to exist without anti-Semitism—or they have chosen to cut themselves off from one of the challenging opportunities which face Jews today.

For the Jew and Christian to meet, not only to confront a brutally tragic past, but to try to build a new future based on mutual understanding, appreciation and trust, is for both to be engaged in sacred task. It is a task, not of dilution or compromise of faith, not of evasion or coverup of commitment and principle, but of hammering out, in patience and honesty, a set of ground rules whereby the elder and younger brother and sister—Judaism and Christianity—can live side by side in a relationship of mutual enrichment and cooperation. To design this pattern will be the responsibility of many generations, but it is, and will be, an exciting and noble achievement every step along the way.

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An Evangelical and the Interfaith Movement

WILLIAM SANFORD LASOR

IN THIS PAPER I SHALL ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE the difficulties I have encountered as an evangelical Christian in my pilgrimage from a rather narrow-minded, exclusivist position to cordial, if not complete, participation in the interfaith movement. I tell this story for two reasons: (1) first, I believe that it will help my Jewish readers to understand a little better the convictions of a Christian who takes his Bible—Old and New Testaments—as the word of God and, therefore, as the rule for his faith and his action; (2) then, too, I hope that it will help some of my Christian readers, who are still grappling with some of the problems that I have faced, to work their way through these problems and come to a deeper understanding of what is involved in establishing better Jewish-Christian relations.

In making such a statement I realize that I am taking considerable risk. Some of the things I say may alienate Jewish readers—although I sincerely hope not. Ink is cold; it does not carry the facial expressions, the look of the eyes, the tone of the voice. What I write in love as an expression of my own feelings may come through to my Jewish readers as evangelical ardor or exclusivist censure. Please believe me when I say that I do not so intend it. The interfaith movement has all too often lacked frank dialogue of what each of us believes. Since our faith involves our deepest feelings, we should speak out of these convictions. Likewise, my Christian readers may think that I have evaded certain Scriptural injunctions. I can only reply that I have devoutly studied the Bible now for about fifty years, and I sincerely believe that I am following its teachings. If you come to different conclusions, that is your conscientious right, but please hear me out.

A brief description of my background is perhaps in order. I was brought up in a home largely following the Scottish Presbyterian way of life. Some of my playmates were Catholics, but I was exposed to fear and criticism of the Catholic Church. When I was about thirteen I was enrolled in a public high school that was over 90% Jewish. On “Jewish holidays”—as we called them—classes were suspended, and the three non-Jews in my class (two Negroes and I) played games in the school gym. My Jewish classmates “adopted” me, taught me how to write Hebrew and some elements of reading it. I was, indeed, fortunate, for I learned early in life

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to accept Jews and Blacks as persons. But there was no discussion of our religious faith.

As a chaplain in World War II, I entered a new phase. I was taught to serve men and women of all faiths and to cooperate with clergy of different convictions without compromising my own. Gradually, I came to the point where I could discuss certain points of religious belief with a priest or a rabbi, but I was basically still an exclusivist. After the war I entered Dropsie University for doctoral studies. Since many of my classmates were evangelical Christians, I can hardly describe this experience as an exposure to Judaism. However, I was greatly impressed, when, in Coptic or Syriac classes where we were reading New Testament passages, our mentors could discuss the New Testament, even in Greek, with great understanding. I had to admit that I could hardly discuss Jewish religious convictions with Jews with the same degree of understanding.

For the past twenty-nine years I have been "Professor of Old Testament," and it is from study in this field that my movement into interfaith activities has made the most progress. Since I was (and still am) committed to the position that "the Scriptures of the Old Testament are the Word of God, the infallible rule of faith and practice" (from my ordination vows), I was forced to take the Old Testament, the Jewish Bible, as of equal authority with the New Testament. I had to face the question, "Has God cast off His people forever?" The Apostle Paul had faced the same question (Romans 11:1), and his answer, since it was part of the Scriptures to which I subscribed, had to be my authority. I studied Romans 9-11, and gradually came to see that my previous position had been somewhat less than Scriptural. Jews were, and are, according to those chapters, God's people.

But there were still some terribly basic questions that had to be faced: (1) Is Jesus Christ the only Savior? (2) Is He the Son of God? (3) Is He the Jewish Messiah? Obviously, my Jewish friends could not accept the same answers to these questions that I would be forced to give my religious convictions. Could there, then, be true religious fellowship and interfaith cooperation when we held radically different convictions on these basic points? There has been much soul-searching on my part, which I shall attempt to describe.

Salvation. We have greatly diluted this wonderful word, and the result is much misunderstanding. We have made it a fire-escape, the way to avoid Hell. But, in the Old and New Testaments, it is a very rich concept. It is the removal of all that offends God and distorts His creation. It is the process by which God restores the harmony, beauty, and integrity of the world which He had made and which was once "very good." It did not start with Jesus; it is the story that is told in the Old Testament. Jesus was born of a Jewish mother. He was brought up on the Jewish Scriptures. He began his ministry with Jews and limited it almost exclusively to Jews. It is true that there were points at which he came into conflict with other Jews,

but he never repudiated the Jewish Scriptures. In fact, he said that he did not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17).

The early Church was composed largely of Jews. All of Jesus' disciples were Jews, and every book of the New Testament, except for the works of Luke (the Gospel of Luke and the Acts) was written by a Jew. The early Church confronted a world composed of Jews and Gentiles. That very concept is Jewish. As the early Church developed, it moved into the gentile world. Gentiles were pagans; they worshipped idols. They needed to turn from darkness to light, from Satan to the power of God, from paganism to the God who had revealed Himself to the Jews and who had commissioned the Jews to be the source of light to the Gentiles and of blessing to the whole world. But Jews were not pagans. The Church did not urge Jews to leave their God and to worship the God of the Christians. Rather, it preached, as had the prophets of old, the need for repentance and for return to the God of Abraham and Moses and David and the prophets. To Jews, the early Christians proclaimed the Jewish Scriptures and declared that the promises of the Old Testament prophets were being fulfilled.

From time to time I have heard Jewish friends speak of "triumphalism." I confess that I do not know the origin of the term, and I am not sure of its meaning, but I gather that it refers to the attitude that the Christian Church must, at last, triumph and all other religious systems must fail. I admit that such a view is implicit or explicit in much Christian preaching and writing. I once held some such view, but I have come to see that it is not consistent with Biblical teachings, particularly those set forth in chapters 9–11 of Romans. I believe that the redemptive purpose of God is organic. It has been working through the ages and is still working. I reject any idea that God was suddenly forced, by Jewish unbelief, to put into action "Plan B." I, the Gentile, am the outsider, and by God's grace we Gentiles have been brought into God's plan of salvation. If there is any triumphalism, it is the victory of God that we pray for and work for.

What place does Jesus Christ have in this? The Jewish Scriptures tell of a prophet whom God would raise up who would be like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18). They tell of a servant who would bear the sins of many and accomplish the healing of his people (Isaiah 53:5–6). They tell of light shining on the people who lived in darkness (Isaiah 9:2), of blessing for the Gentiles (Genesis 12:3), of Torah going forth from Jerusalem to lead Gentiles in the way of the God of Jacob (Isaiah 2:3), of justice and righteousness established by the throne of David (Isaiah 9:7). As a Christian, I believe that, in Jesus, these great truths have begun to be fulfilled.

Son of God. When I face the concept of the "Son of God," I confess that I face a great mystery. Adam was the son of God (Luke 3:38). So was the king of Zion's holy hill (Psalm 2:7). When certain Jews were about to stone

Jesus, they gave as their reason, "because you, a man, make yourself God." Jesus replied, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?" (John 10:34). Jesus was quoting Psalm 82:6, "I say, 'You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you.'" Jesus seemed to prefer to call himself "Son of Man." His disciples, who were Jews, avoided that term, and came to speak of him as "the Son of God." Paul, who was trained at the feet of the great Rabban Gamliel, spells out in several places his conviction that Jesus is the Son of God.

It is easy for me, a Gentile, to accept such doctrines as the deity of Christ, the Trinity, and the Incarnation. For most Jews such concepts make little sense and seem to violate clear teachings of the Scriptures. Yet I am faced with the simple fact that those ancient Jews who followed Jesus are the ones from whom I learned such doctrines. How do I explain this apparent contradiction? Can it be that gentile Christians have so distorted and hellenized the concept of Jesus as the Son of God that it is no longer acceptable to Jews? Or is there a mystery in the Godhead, a community of personality that required Him, when He created Adam in His own image, to create Adam male and female (Genesis 5:1-2), a Being of such complexity that we are forced to speak of "the angel of the Lord," "the spirit of the Lord," "*bath Qol*," or "the son of God" when we attempt to describe His redemptive activity? I bow before the mystery and confess that I am mere man and that He is God.

The Christ (Messiah). The early Christians, under the tutelage of the Apostles, called Jesus "the Christ." The Greek term was an exact translation of the Hebrew term which has given us the word "Messiah." When those Christian Jews called Jesus by this term it is certain that they believed that he was the descendant of the dynasty of David who would fulfill the prophecies of the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel. Gradually, the term "Christ" took on wider and wider meanings until the concept became much more than the Jewish belief in a Messiah, while, at the same time, it became just a name. As a result, there are Christians today who have no idea of the Jewish concept of "Messiah," and who reject any notion that there will once again be a kingdom of Israel with a king in Jerusalem. There are also many Jews who have given up the idea of a Messiah. For a Christian, who has no clear idea of what "Messiah" means, to insist on convincing a Jew, who perhaps has no clear idea of what the word means, that Jesus is the Messiah, seems to be an exercise in futility.

Therefore, I have made it my business to attempt to understand, first, the Jewish concept of Messiah, from the earliest Scriptural roots, through the development of the idea during the Second Commonwealth and into Rabbinic times, and then to attempt to understand what the New Testament writers understood by the term "Christ." It is now possible for me to have dialogue with a Jewish friend on the subject, dialogue that is meaningful and, I hope, helpful to both of us. Once again I remind myself that I am the outsider, I am the Gentile, and all that I ever learned about

the Messiah I learned from Jews,—pre-Christian, Christian, and non-Christian. The Messiah is a Jewish concept, and the messianic king will teach the Torah to gentile nations and bring righteousness and peace to the world.

As the redemptive purpose of our God nears the goal toward which it has been moving, there will be, unless I have been following cunningly devised fables, a reuniting of God's creation. God's people, Jew and Gentile, will be one people, just as the olive tree, in Paul's figure, is one (Romans 11:24). And, to continue to use Paul's figure, this will not be the grafting of Jewish branches into a gentile olive tree, but "these natural branches will be grafted back into their own olive tree."

In interfaith activities, my own faith has become richer and more meaningful. From the Jew I have my God, my Bible, my faith, my Savior. I am, to use Paul's words once more, "debtor to the Jew." From my Jewish friend I have learned to examine my beliefs and my actions more carefully, and I have learned something of his faith and life. He has helped me, and if I have helped him, too, I am glad. Faith is not a goal; it is a commitment to God by which we move toward His goal by His leading. Interfaith dialogue should not, and does not, require the denial or removal of parts of that faith; rather, it should result in the increase of faith, of commitment to God's redemptive work. In that spirit I participate in the interfaith movement.

Interfaith at Fifty—It Has Worked!

MARTIN E. MARTY

SINCE THE WORD “ECUMENISM” COVERS movements between Christians, in America the word “interfaith” almost always implies conversations or efforts that cross lines between Jews and Christians. To ask how interfaith has worked for fifty years, then, is to show concern chiefly for two groups of believers, two sets of people.

Measured by almost any standard of intergroup behavior, interfaith in America has worked splendidly. The climate of religious freedom, mutual tolerance, and congeniality in America seems miraculous when compared with previous Western history or with life in most nations even today. Wars between Hindus and Muslims in India and Pakistan or Bangla Desh, between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East, between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, and between everybody in Lebanon illustrate the normal human condition. The reasons for the different spirit in America are too complex for rehearsal here. In some ways, the rich landscape and humanscape made a more congenial arrangement both necessary and possible.

If intergroup relations have their healthy side, these result not from pure serendipity or apathy, but because thoughtful people have taken pains to assure them. Fifty years ago, when a new stage of interfaith conversations began, the climate was not favorable. Historians speak of “the tribal twenties.” The Ku Klux Klan in its revival then spread hooded terror against Catholics and Jews as well as Blacks. Soon, Father Charles Coughlin was to join other radio preachers of the thirties in making quasi-fascist appeals to millions. In the Depression years, sullen anti-Semites blamed Jews for being international financiers who brought on problems by their super-capitalism *and*, at the same time, Bolsheviks whose communism undercut the American capitalist system. As war approached, Jews were, to them, both powerful merchants of death and weak victims whose existence drew America into international rescue missions. That many Jews reacted with anti-Christianism in such a time was natural. Yet, over against such trends, the interfaith movement made its way, until today it suffers, as does ecumenism at its side, from being taken for granted, from relaxed acceptance of its gifts without responsible readiness for its legacy of unfinished business.

Through these years there have been numerous domestic tensions across interfaith lines. A public has been confused over debates as to

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whether there even *is* a “Judeo-Christian” tradition. It now seems clear that the tradition was invented by some of the more ardent interfaith advocates and that, today, new language is needed to describe the bonds and covenants between two faiths or outlooks that differ significantly in their whole philosophy of history and in many of their hopes. During these years, at least two scholarly studies have connected Christian orthodoxy with cognitive anti-Semitism. Yet, in the first case it was impossible to show how the pious put their theological scruples against Jews into action; many of them could not have been more friendly to contemporary Jews. In the second, the authors pointed out that even the most Biblicistic Protestant publishers of educational materials readily changed their emphases when the implied anti-Semitism in their Biblical teaching was pointed out to them.

In these years, in countless communities, Christians began to learn, however slowly, that crèches on court house lawns were offensive to Jewish sensibilities, and Jews learned that not all “Born Again” Christians worked against Jewish claims. In these years, the Roman Catholics and other denominations excised ancient liturgical “reproaches” against Jews, and Jews in various communications media became more sensitive to conservative Christian understandings. If there were times in which ruthless and rootless “Jews for Jesus” exploited the spiritual malaise of the day, it was also a time in which theologians in Christianity stressed their ties to Jewish faith and rabbis wrote out of fresh respect for Jesus. If the Vatican Declaration on the Jews was not wholly satisfying, it was light years ahead of even the most generous expressions of those pre-World War II Catholics and Protestants who were friendly to Jews but who saw them as being humanly valuable chiefly because some day they might become Christians. None of these changes occurred naturally. Almost all of them can be credited to the individual and group efforts of people who increased their senses of empathy and sympathy, thanks to the interfaith movement and its byproducts.

These were also the most fateful years in Jewish history since the Exodus, the Exile and the destruction of Jerusalem, and the expulsion from Spain in 1492. The Holocaust is a qualitatively different event from any other pogrom or near-genocide on Western soil in all of history. Its effects are so devastating that even the survivors of death camps who have spent forty years pondering its meaning grope for words and often fall silent. How two generations who have no living experience of it can now find concepts to appropriate it is almost impossible to grasp.

Along with the great sign of negation, Jews also experienced the modern positive moment of the birth and survival of Israel, and the Christian world is learning to face up to the meanings—both military and spiritual—of 1948, 1967, and 1973 ff. All the polls show that, through these years, a huge majority of Christians came to support Israel, however uneasy many of them were with what they originally regarded as an

intrusion, however morally urgent, of a new nation among the diffuse set of peoples in Palestine. To the surprise of many Jews, some of their best friends were the conservative Proestants who looked like domestic anti-Semites. These Protestants were often millennialists who believed in a different final fate for the sons and daughters of Israel than did the pioneers of the new nation, but their belief did commit these Christians to the survival and support of Israel.

Let me rank as a third great test of Jewish change in this period the simple, but dramatic, fact of suburbanization in America. Modernity affected Jews anew when postwar affluence and freedom led to a new diaspora, the voluntary disruption of the ghetto. When, thanks to the V.H.A. and the F.H.A., Americans began to move, following esthetic preference and nothing but income group possibilities, the memory of the *shtetl* and ghetto quickly disappeared among the “liberated” parental generation and their subsequent generations of children. The threat that intermarriage means to Jewish survival and the growth of new norms for small families are both directly related to the suburban diffusion. To personalize the instance: as a suburban minister in Chicago in the late 1950s, I met many Jewish neighbors who did not know well a single Christian until college, G.I. or suburban years—just as, being a Nebraskan boy, I had not known a single Jew well until post-seminary days. Now we meet in living rooms, public schools, zoning boards, and in countless community endeavors, to the profit of intergroup life and at expense to ethnic and religious boundaries.

For all that we can say about achievement and reason for fresh urgency in these fifty years, it is also necessary to say that the interfaith movement is not so secure that it can always stand up well when tested. My thesis from here on in is simple: movements of this sort are most important at the points of greatest tension. When people wish to abandon them, they become most necessary. Thus, the American Civil Liberties Union is not a very interesting organization to me except when it defends the freedom of groups that I find *utterly repulsive*—for example, the American Nazi Party—or *quite* repulsive, like the new intense religious cults that psychologically snatch young people from their contexts. On each such occasion it is important to remember that in every other case the A.C.L.U. takes up, it equally offends someone with different outlooks than mine. When people want to abandon or repudiate the A.C.L.U., it becomes most important for us to defend it.

So with interfaith activity. To this participant-observer through half of its fifty years, one incident more than any other illuminated the tensions and threats to conversation and joint activity. With the instincts of a diarist and historian, let me focus on that occasion as a paradigm or parable of all the other stressful or distressful moments of the half century. If readers of JUDAISM will either reminisce or consult their own files, they will find that never in these years were there more misun-

derstandings of Judaism by Christians or more abrupt calls for the end of “dialogue” by Jews than in the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War. Because conversation was gradually restored, if in somewhat more muted and stammering ways, it is easier to forget the disgust or despair to which parties at the time were giving voice. Then, as now, it seemed to me that such a time is *precisely* the moment when interfaith activity is most needed and demanding.

For a new generation, a few lines of recall are necessary. The morning after the Six-Day War broke out, Jewish leaders and organizations and many of their most ardent supporters in the Christian community sent out words of appeal to denominations and leaders that they make demands to the United States Government to come to the aid of Israel morally, as it seemed to be doing, and militarily if necessary. The denominations, in most cases, and the leaders, in some, were slow to reply. Not many sided with the enemies of Israel, though a few in “Third World” interest groups and in radical camps did. Many remained silent, or spoke only with some ambiguity and caution. Then followed instant recriminations from many Jews and expressions of weariness and frustration from many Christians.

The context of that event in American history is easily forgotten. The War in Vietnam was tearing apart the moral fabric of the nation, and only through long and painful teaching experiences and not a little disruptive action were anti-war people beginning to have an effect in religious circles. For the first time, during a war, the possibility of selective conscientious objection was getting a hearing, and the appeal for troop withdrawal in the interest of non-violence and peace seemed at least plausible. Among the most effective leaders in the move for these changes were people like Martin Luther King, Robert McAfee Brown, and Abraham Joshua Heschel. The day after the war broke out they called on others to sign *New York Times* advertisements calling for all kinds of United States support for Israel.

In the centers of mass communications, in the elite academies and wherever people are psychically mobile, it is not difficult to make distinctions—and they are vast—between the two wars and the need for different responses to each. But many of us, aware of life in the boondocks and backwoods, the bars and bowling alleys of the other 80% of America, knew how utterly confusing such calls to war by the new people of peace sounded. So, there was reluctance among many to sign. I have never felt that a *New York Times* advertisement is the final test of where one stands, especially to those of us who are given many other outlets for expression, so I was among the non-signers. Our (my?) record of tilting toward Israel before and after 1967 is clear enough. There seemed little reason to doubt that the United States, without our demands, would aid Israel as it had. We could have been wrong. It smarted, however, when we immediately heard that failure to decide within two days of a six-day war simply wrote us out of Jewish-Christian conversation.

Similarly, American Jews, being urbanized—half of them concentrated in greater New York—are able to come to decisions or to give expression through conference and media much more rapidly than are Christian denominations which are Protean, sprawled out, mercurial at times and glacial at others. The 1967 war came at a time when the people who issued pronouncements from boards and bureaus at headquarters were fighting for their necks; many of them lost them later. During this great populist revolt against such expression, leaders of denominations that take six years to make pronouncements in their own conventions, when issues dealing with their own survival are at stake, could hardly be expected to spread political and military sophistication fast enough to speak plausibly to, or for, their groups. A very, very few supported the Arab cause; almost all the others were looking for ways to back Israel, but the instant press release or *New York Times* advertisement did not work. Understandably, but I think wrongly, many Jewish advocates of earlier interfaith talk followed by saying it was all a charade, a sham, a worthless venture. I think, and I hope, that subsequent history has proved them wrong.

For the future of interfaith conversation, it is important that Jews and Christians learn about more dimensions of each others' communities. Regionalism remains a problem. Despite "suburbanization," centers of Jewish strength are usually far from Christian centers, and most do not really know each other across these lines. Extremism remains an issue. Jews like to seize on the words of marginal Protestant groups like "Jews for Jesus" or professional anti-Semites as being representative, and Christians often take the Jewish Defense League, on one side, or the American Council for Judaism, on the other, as being more representative of Jewish aspirations than they really are. While far more Christians than before have come to see how integral Israel is to Jewish survival and to most expressions of faith, not all do. Nor do all Jews allow Christians as much freedom to criticize specific policies of Israel as they may take themselves. Theological explorations of many themes must reinforce the more political discussions in the interfaith movement. The list of topics is extensive—a sign of how needed the movement is in a day of apathy and confusion. And, as I have argued, conversation is needed most when it is most frustrating and most severely tested.

The New Covenant of Moses

ROBERT ALAN HAMMER

IN THE HISTORY OF EACH NATION AND EACH religion, certain moments are critical. They mark those occasions on the cross-roads of history when crucial decisions had to be made that would determine the fate of the group and the direction which it would take in the future. For the Jewish people one such instance occurred soon after the theophany at Sinai.

For one moment in its history the people of Israel stood in peril of its existence. Following the worship of the golden calf, God threatened them with destruction:

Now let me be, that my anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them (Ex. 32:10).

The way in which the threat was rescinded is only one of several fascinating aspects of the story of the golden calf. There are other puzzling aspects, such as why the rescinding of the decree is followed, not by rejoicing, but by Moses' continued pleading for the people. Why does God change His mind, as it were? Why does Moses remain dissatisfied and what does he hope to achieve?

The anger of God seems extreme, but it was only a short time earlier that the Israelites had been presented with the option of becoming His people, an offer which, midrashim to the contrary, they had accepted with joy:

Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My Covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the people. Indeed all the earth is Mine, but you shall be to Me a Kingdom of priests and a holy Nation (Ex. 19:5-6).

And all the people answered as one saying, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!" (Ex. 19:8).

Yet, at the very first opportunity, they disobeyed and violated at least one of the basic provisions in the agreement between themselves and God:

You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image . . .

You shall not bow down to them or serve them (Ex. 20: 4-5)

And, possibly, another:

You shall have no other God besides Me (Ex. 20:3).

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God was not exaggerating when He told Moses, "They have been quick to turn aside from the way that I enjoined upon them" (32:8). And yet, as quick as the people had been, and as blazing as was God's anger, so, too, is God's change of heart. After but a few words by Moses we are told:

And the Lord renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon His people (Ex. 32:14).

Furthermore, Israel is given permission to continue on its journey:

Go, depart hence, you and the people that you have brought from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying to your offspring will I give it (Ex. 33:1).

To comprehend God's decision, it is important to note that the reference to the Patriarchs here is, in no sense, accidental. Indeed, prominent in Moses' plea to God is the sentence:

Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, how you swore to them by Your self and said to them: I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and I will give to your offspring the whole land of which I spoke, to possess for ever (Ex. 32:13).

God's answer, then, reflects, and is a response to, Moses' plea. Moses argues that the Covenant made with the Fathers must not be broken, and God responds by agreeing to abide by that Covenant. What, exactly, was its nature and why was it such a powerful weapon in the hands of Moses?

The answer becomes apparent if we consider that the Covenant with the Fathers is a type of covenant termed "grant," which is binding upon the ruler. It is "an act of royal benevolence arising from the King's desire to reward his loyal servant."¹

Although there are two parties to the grant, the obligation rests upon the giver. What is interesting to note is that this grant by God to the Fathers, as a reward for their devotion to them, was not a mere imitation of a known near-Eastern form, devoid of essence, but that it actually functioned as a binding authority in this crucial incident in Israel's history. As Moses reminds Him, God had promised to Abraham that his children would inherit the land. That grant carried absolutely no conditions with it, with the exception of circumcision (Gen. 17:9-14), which is a sign of His Covenant, and, therefore, a kind of condition of it. It is true that God fully expected the descendants to be worthy of the grant, following the ways of Abraham, and ready to "keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right," (Gen. 18:19), but even this was not a condition.

We now understand God's immediate capitulation to Moses' request. He had no choice, as it were, since He was bound by the grant that He had

1. Moshe Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 90 (1970): 188.

made. It was unconditional, guaranteeing the national territory as well as the nationhood of the group.² Why, then, had God even threatened such destruction? We may be able to find the answer by studying Moses' reaction to God's positive response.

Moses is appalled at the thought that God is sending the people of Israel to the Land, for God has stated that: "I will not go in your midst, since you are a stiffnecked people, lest I destroy you on the way" (Ex. 33:3). Instead, He is sending a messenger to lead them (Ex. 32:34), as had been mentioned previously, but never before as a substitute for God (Ex. 23:20). Moses continues, therefore, to plead with God and again he succeeds. What exactly does he want? What is it that Moses asks which results in another change of heart in God's response:

And He said "I will go in the lead" (Ex. 33:14)

And He answered, "I will make all My goodness pass before you as I proclaim the name of the Lord before you" (Ex. 33:19).

These statements are in response to Moses' successful argument, the essence of which can be found in the following:

Let me know Your ways . . . Consider that this nation is Your people (Ex. 33:13).

For how would it be known that I have gained your favor, I and Your people, unless You go with us, that we may be distinguished, I and Your people, from every people on the face of the earth? (Ex. 33:16).

What disturbs Moses now is, indeed, connected to a Covenant, but not the Covenant of the Fathers which has already been restored. Another Covenant had been made, quite different from the first one. Moses is now requesting that the Covenant made at Sinai be restored, a Covenant which resulted from God's invitation uttered before Sinai:

Now then if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My Covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the people. Indeed all the earth is Mine, and you shall be to Me a Kingdom of priests and a holy Nation. (Ex. 19:5-6).

This new Covenant, symbolized and solemnized by the Ten Commandments, falls into the category of the treaty-Covenant³ in which both parties are bound to certain conditions. These are the norms and statutes which were to become the Commandments of Judaism.

Here the emphasis is upon the terms which the people must fulfill in order to achieve the status of God's personal treasure. What is particularly important to note is that this Covenant is *not* unconditional; on the contrary, it is marked by continuous "if's," as in Ex. 19:5, "—if you will

2. See Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (N.Y. 1966), p. 102.

3. Weinfeld, *Op cit.* See, also, Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford, 1972).

obey me.” It was *this* Covenant which had been broken and, therefore, had lost its standing. It was the seriousness of the abrogation of *this* Covenant that led to the possibility of destruction. God was no longer bound to look upon the Jews as His people, and that is why Moses constantly requests that He remember that they are *His* people (Ex. 32:11, 12; 33:13, 16).

This, too, is the meaning of Moses' request that God's presence be with them (Ex. 33:14, 15, 16) and also explains the symbolism of the removal of the Tent, the symbol of God's presence, from the camp (Ex. 32:7–11). As the Book of Leviticus explains:

I will establish My abode in your midst, and I will not spurn you, I will be ever present in your midst: I will be your God, and you will be My people (Lev. 26:11–12).

Not being present means that He is not their God, i.e., that the Covenant has been broken.

The story becomes clear, then, when we understand the role played by the two different Covenants. The unconditional Covenant of the Fathers *could not* be broken; God *had* to honor His promise to give them a land to make of them a nation. The Covenant of Sinai, to make them *His* people, on the other hand, could be, and was, broken. According to the narrative, God considered this Covenant to be abrogated and was ready to return the people to its prior status, but was persuaded by Moses not to do so after those responsible had been punished. As a matter of fact, Moses used the Covenant terms themselves—God's description of His Goodness—as a persuasive argument:

Pray let me know Your ways (Ex. 33:13).

Those ways had been described as:

Visiting the guilt of the Fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generations of those who reject Me, but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My Commandments (Ex. 20:5–6).

God's response is clearly based on those words, echoing and amplifying the phrases:

The Lord! The Lord!—a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, rich in steadfast kindness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He does not remit all punishment, but visits the iniquity of fathers upon children and children's children unto the third and fourth generations (Ex. 34:6–7).

God then explicitly declares that He is making a Covenant (34:10), and the final symbol of this renewed Covenant is that the tablets of the Covenant themselves are to be restored (Ex. 34:27). The physical symbol of the “My

people—Your God” relationship had been destroyed, but it is whole once again, as is the relationship itself.

Paradoxically, the grant-Covenant, which entailed so much less, was responsible for the continued physical existence of the Jewish people, while the treaty-Covenant had almost led to their destruction. Only when the grant-Covenant had rescued them from destruction could Moses begin again to work toward his higher goal of the restoration of the treaty-Covenant.

This crucial incident, in which both Covenants played such decisive, although distinct, roles poses a fascinating possibility before us. It raises the spectre of a history of the Jewish people totally different from that which took place. Either after the golden calf, or, more likely, at the initial appearance of Moses, the people of Israel could have followed the role assigned them by the Covenant of the Fathers. The Sinai Covenant might never have existed or never been actualized. The Jews could have been given a land without becoming the Lord’s people, with all that the choice implies. This was exactly what God agreed to, following Moses’ first plea, an agreement which was totally unsatisfactory to Moses. Perhaps the oath to the Fathers was sufficient, in and of itself, at one time, but, later, that was no longer true. On the contrary, the new Covenant, with its deeper meaning and wider implications, was so important that a return to the promise of the Fathers was viewed as a catastrophic step backwards.

The relationship which Moses brought to the people and sought to preserve was different. It was that of a holy people and required that they live according to God’s laws. To create a people and to give them material blessings is important and could be a goal in itself. To make a people into a holy nation, a priestly kingdom, is quite another. The experiment almost terminated before it began. The fate of the people almost reverted to an earlier stage. What prevented this may have been the entreaties of Moses, the punishment of the people and their acts of repentance.

The contribution of Moses to the development of Judaism clearly was more than the idea of monotheism. At the very least, it also contained the powerful vision of the Covenant people, a unique concept of service to God and devotion to His ways which is the source from which stem all other aspects of Judaism, including its ethical and ritual codes.

Theoretically, at least, although no one can second-guess history, it would have been possible for a leader to emerge from among the enslaved Israelites, who would have led them to freedom on the basis of an ancient divine promise, a Covenant of grant to their ancestors to give them a land and to make them a people—and nothing else. Indeed, the call to Moses begins with just that promise and nothing more:

I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:8).

I will take you out of the misery of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites (Ex. 3:17).

I will establish My covenant with them, to give them the land in which they lived as sojourners . . . and I have remembered My covenant (Ex. 6:4-5).

But, then, a new and crucial idea is added:

And I will take you to be My people and I will be your God (Ex. 6:7)

after which the destiny of the Israelites could never be the same.

This one verse, expressing the essence of the new Covenant, may well be the most important one in the history of the Jewish people. From the concept embodied in it stems our unique understanding of ourselves and of our role. These words changed the mission of Moses and the Exodus from a political liberation movement into a transforming experience that led to the creation of a holy people.

It may be said that, by this new Covenant, Moses took away, for all time, the possibility that Israel could be a nation like any other nation. The land was a gift. Transcending it, although not replacing it, was a relationship with God. The land was, and is, not only the place where the people could live, but the place where this relationship is to be fully realized, where God's people can attain its holiness.

Rabbi Jacob Emden: The Views of An Enlightened Traditionalist on Christianity

BLU GREENBERG

JACOB EMDEN (1698–1776) WAS A BRILLIANT halakhist-philosopher of the 18th century who, in many ways, left a greater impact on the Rabbinic world of succeeding generations than did his more popular contemporary—and arch-rival—Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschütz. It is, indeed, a fact that his responsa and commentaries are better known and more widely quoted than are any others of that period.

Emden's scholarship was impeccable; his integrity—absolute, even to the extent that it caused him great personal isolation.¹ He was unbelievably prolific, all the more outstanding when one considers that he personally set the type for his own numerous works.² He kept nothing hidden from view and his personal diary is more open than a Victorian novel.

Yet there still remain many mysteries about him. Not the least is his surprising attitude towards Christianity. How can one explain his views—revolutionary for his own time and still not wholly acceptable to those who revere his halakhic works today? What factors caused a conservative traditionalist, an Orthodox Jew who grew up in a climate of separatism, to call Christians—“our brothers,” Jesus—“a righteous teacher,” Christianity—“a holy community of God,” and to say of Christian prophecy that it was given by God Himself?

To understand just how remarkably innovative his ideas were, we must examine them (a) from the perspective of his own time, and (b) in relation to the Jewish attitude prevalent then towards Christianity.

(a) In the social-political reality of the 18th century the Jews were a chartered sub-group of the general society and, as such, were subject to arbitrary, local rule. Accordingly, each individual Jewish community was affected by the prevailing public opinion about Jews, or the relative need for them in the local economies. Thus, Jews were expelled or admitted,

1. He was not fearful of taking on unpopular causes, such as the controversy with Israel Zamosc, in which Emden argues for the independence of the *posek* from the *Shulhan Arukh*; or his critique of the *takannah* outlawing polygamy; or his critical analysis of the authorship of the Zohar, to name but a few.

2. Yitzchak Raphael published an annotated bibliography of Emden's works which itself ran to over 45 pages. See Yitzchak Raphael, “The Complete Works of Rabbi Jacob Emden,” in *Areschet*, Annual for Jewish Bibliographic Research (Jerusalem, 1961), pp. 231–276.

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tolerated or persecuted, according to local whim, by privilege of *non-tolerandus Judaism*.

On the other hand, a charter sub-group had certain advantages: there was a great deal of Jewish independence in internal matters. As long as they paid their taxes and took care of their own problems, the Jews were granted religious and civil autonomy. The Rabbinic and lay leaders functioned almost as heads of a state within a state. Therefore, though the Jews felt themselves existentially to be at the mercy of the local authorities for their very lives, on a day-to-day basis the internal community loomed as the larger authority. The Jewish community—and not the state—was seen as the extension of oneself in all important matters.³ Thus, in the period preceding the Emancipation, where peace existed it was the peace born of an unmistakable separatism.

(b) However, this social-political separateness had its roots in religious-theological differences. The alien character of the Jew in Christian countries stemmed from the Christian tradition in which Jews were defined as the breakers of the covenant, deicides, the armies of Satan, an amoral and stiff-necked people. Even in the periods of toleration and good human economic relations with Jews, the Christians still fed on a daily diet of theological anti-Semitism and the teachings of contempt.⁴

Yet, the barrier between Jews and Christians was not built from only one side. There was a Jewish contribution to it as well, restricted though it was to the realm of ideas; for, while the social-political reality allowed the Christians to act out their theological anti-Semitism, the Jewish doctrine of separateness remained a theology of a powerless people. It could be articulated at no other level. Nevertheless, the Jewish concepts of chosenness, and of divine election, were stressed daily:

Blessed be the Lord, Master of the Universe, Who has chosen us from amongst all the nations. . . .

And for those who neglected to say the daily morning Torah blessings, this theme was repeated in the silent devotion of the festival holidays, at the peak moment of celebration and intimate historical memory.

You did choose us from among all peoples, loving us and taking delight in us. You did exalt us above all tongues by making us holy through Your commandments. You have drawn us near, O our King, unto Your service and have called us by Your great and holy name.

Because the Jews were physically and psychologically oppressed—or, at best, vulnerable at any given moment—they needed these anchors in their tradition to carry them through the darkest of times. Much as the

3. See Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, pp. 21–38.

4. See Jacob Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*; James Parkes, *The Conflict Between the Church and the Synagogue*; Jules Isaac, *The Teachings of Contempt*. Also, the Gospels and the works of the Church Fathers. For example, see Augustine, *The City of God*, Books 15 and 17.

concepts of chosenness and of the special ethical and religious calling of the Jew are central to the whole construct of *mizvot*, these themes also served as psychic recompense for their suffering.

But the whole truth must be stated: the obverse condition of this chosenness and special calling was the inferiority of the Gentile, of those who were referred to in the traditional literature as the *umot ha'olam*, the nations of the world. Interestingly, in using this generic term, the Rabbis created a technique whereby ancient references to other religions could be related to those religions co-existent with Judaism in each particular age. Thus, whatever statements had accumulated under this rubric in the past, came to be identified, in medieval Jewish thought, with Christianity. Jacob Katz points out that the Biblical name, Edom, was, in Talmudic times, applied to Rome; in medieval poetry, it became synonymous with Christianity.⁵

The general concept of Jewish spiritual supremacy was fleshed out in greater detail: the Jews submitted to the 613 commandments while the *umot ha'olam* did not.⁶ Israel alone devotes itself to the study of Torah while the *umot ha'olam* rejected it; God bestows His *Shekhinah* on Israel alone;⁷ prophecy in Israel is at a higher level than prophecy in other nations (God grants other nations prophecy lest they be bereft of leadership altogether). Medieval Jewry applied all of these negative judgments to Christianity.

The disputations themselves pushed this process further. Even though the Jewish participants in the disputations had to proceed ever so gingerly in defense of their belief—or pay heavily for it afterwards—nevertheless, there emerged a subtle counter-dialectic which further repudiated Christianity: Jesus as the Messiah was refuted, the Trinity was denied.⁸ The temptations of Christianity were highlighted and flogged. In this last detail, the mission aspect of Christianity also generated a strong Jewish defense, since antagonism to mission work provided anti-Christian warnings within the Jewish community and fueled the fires of Jewish separatism.

The final argument was that Judaism alone stressed Torah, *mizvot* and the unity of one God. By contrast, Christianity was tainted with the impure monotheism of the Trinity, notions of the virgin birth and the crucifixion. Moreover, all of these concepts were embodied in physical representations—graven images which were outlawed and alien to Jews—and which could only serve to push Christianity one step closer towards the category of idol-worship.

5. Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, p. 16.

6. Read the well-known "chauvinist" Midrash (B.T. *Avodah Zarah* 2b) on how the other nations rejected the Torah because of certain *mizvot* contained within it (e.g.) Thou shalt not kill, steal, etc.) while the Jews said, "*Na'aseh ve'nishma*" (We will do and we will listen).

7. This becomes one of the central themes of Kabbalah.

8. Katz cites Rabbi Joseph Bekhor Shor who showed how the *Shema* is a daily refutation of Christianity and its concept of the Trinity (*Exclusiveness* . . . p. 19).

This, then, was the general attitude of medieval Jewry toward Christianity—an attitude which was still widely held in the time of Rabbi Jacob Emden and against which backdrop his views were considered radical. However, before examining those views, we must briefly remark that certain fundamental changes—the initial stirrings of Emancipation—were already taking place in the 1700s.

The impact of pre-Emancipation currents on the Jewish community was deep and manifold. Jews were allowed to seek acceptance in the general society—and to move out of the tight little orbit of their own community. Similarly, the State began to intervene in the inner life of the community. Step by step, the internal autonomy based on Jewish values was eroded. Assimilation proceeded apace. Traditional values—such as religious education, Talmud study, and strict adherence to halakhah as the norm—were no longer unquestioned.

There were many, from within and without, who resisted this growing move towards Emancipation. “Without” were those Christians who had inherited a long-standing antagonism towards the Jew and somehow managed to create new negative stereotypes to serve their purposes. “Within” were the conservative elements who sensed that Emancipation would totally undermine the Jewish quality of life; within the community, too, were those who well understood that Jews would never rise above the second class status attributed to them by Christianity and would, therefore, never be free of discrimination. The former ultimately became the forerunners of European Orthodoxy. The latter became the founders of modern Zionism.

This, then, was a measure of the times in which Jacob Emden lived. In arriving at his own particular stand on Christianity, he crossed several lines.

The Writings on Christianity

Emden’s attitude towards Christianity is reflected in several sources: his letter concerning the Sabbateans,⁹ his *teshuvah* on autopsies,¹⁰ his commentary on *Pirkei Avot*, and his letter to Moses Mendelssohn.

I. In his “Letter Concerning the Sabbateans,” he answers the question posed by the representatives of the Council of Four Lands as to whether or not it is permitted to hand over the Sabbatean heretics for burning.¹¹ Throughout this letter, he displays a surprising familiarity

9. Emden refers to this letter as a *kuntres*. The collection in which this *kuntres* is found was first printed at the end of *Seder Olam Rabbah Ve’Zuta U’Megillat Ta’anit* (Lemberg, 1757). This collection was then reprinted in *Sefer Hashimush* several times, from 1758 to 1762. This particular letter is quoted from *Sefer Hashimush*, Pt. II, *Meteg Lahamor*, sec. *Resen Mateh* (Amsterdam, 1758).

10. The *teshuvah* was in response to a question from Rabbi Benjamin Wolf of Göttingen, as to whether Jewish medical students were permitted to work further with parts of an animal whose autopsy had been performed on the Sabbath.

11. The *teshuvot* were printed at the end of *Seder Olam Rabbah Ve’Zuta U’Megillat Ta’anit* and then reprinted in *Sefer Hashimush*.

with Christian texts, an uncommon quality in traditional circles even today.

Emden describes Christianity's great affinity for, and similarity to, Judaism. When Christians observe their true principles of faith, which are good and righteous ones, then things will go well for Christians and Jews alike. Christians take upon themselves certain limitations, prohibiting even that which the Torah permits. For example, Jews may divorce their wives with a *get*, or swear oaths which are true; but Christianity forbids divorce and oaths altogether.

Emden quotes Paul's letter to the Galatians to show how the Christians never intended to abrogate the Torah for the Jews: "I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is bound to keep the whole law" (Galatians, 5:3).¹²

He cites further proof for this natural affinity and mutuality from the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus says, ". . . think not that I have come to destroy but rather to uphold (the law). . . . Not one letter or dot (jot or tittle) will be deleted. . . ."¹³

Emden quotes Paul again, this time from Corinthians, to point up the Christians' "hands-off" policy—i.e., that each person should abide by his own faith. "Let the circumcised not seek to remove the marks of uncircumcision (to pull down the foreskin¹⁴). . . . Let the uncircumcised not seek circumcision" (1 Corinthians, 7:18).¹⁵

Emden then goes on to justify Paul in the controversy over Timothy. Scholars have asked why Paul should have circumcised Timothy; after all, elsewhere Paul states that circumcision is a temporary commandment, binding only until the coming of the Messiah, and Timothy was born several decades after Jesus. Emden explains that Paul understood and followed Jewish law. Timothy was born to a Greek father and a Jewish mother—and was, thus, Jewish. Paul, having been a student of Rabban

12. Here Emden is guilty of a selective intellectualism to prove his point. Paul's whole theme, in all six chapters of Galatians (as well as in parts of his other Epistles) is that Jewish legalism has no place in the Christian life and is of no saving grace. As a matter of fact, the passage which Emden cites here is Paul's way of telling the Galatians—who were considering undergoing circumcision—that they would be making a big mistake, for they would then be yoking themselves to the halakhah for life, whereas they could take a much simpler step—achieve salvation through faith in Jesus, under the discipline of love.

13. Matthew 5:17–19. Emden incorrectly cites this statement as chapter 10 in both the text at the back of *Seder Olam Rabbah* and in the reprint in *Sefer Hashimush*.

14. *The Westminster Edition, R.S.V.*—Comments: ". . . remove the marks of circumcision by a surgical operation as renegade Jews sometimes did."

15. See *Sefer Hashimush*, pp. 15–16. I believe that Emden's interpretation of the verses in 1 Corinthians is not what Paul really intended. The context of Paul's remarks—and another major theme in Paul's writing—is that it does not matter in what state one found himself at the time of the "call to Christ"—whether married, circumcised, or a slave. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything. . . . Everyone should remain in the state in which he was called. Cf. 1 Corinthians 8:19–23. Paul becomes all things to all men in order to win them to Jesus. See also Gal. 5:6 and 6:15. But all of this is subject for a different discussion. See Blu Greenberg, "Paul and the Jews," in *Papers of Annual Conference of Christians and Jews*, ed., Donald McElvoy (NCCJ, 1978).

Gamaliel Hazaken, understood the halakhah and, therefore, circumcised Timothy.

With proofs such as these, says Emden, we should be able to eliminate the contradiction which seems to appear in some places in the New Testament itself, i.e., that Jesus came to bring a new Torah to replace the Torah of Moses. For it never occurred to the writers of the New Testament that Jesus intended to abrogate Judaism (*le'vattel*); rather, they accepted the fact that Jesus had come to the Gentiles to establish a new religion, for them alone. What's more, this was not even a new religion, says Emden, but an old one—the 7 Noahide commandments—which they had forgotten. For Jews, however, not one single law was to be changed.

Emden justifies Paul and the apostles for forbidding circumcision and the observance of Sabbath to the Gentiles. After all, says Emden, is that not how we do it ourselves with a potential convert? We do not circumcise those who have not accepted all of the *mizvot*. Moreover, we try to discourage them from accepting all of the *mizvot* lest it be too much for them to assume full responsibility. Did not Naomi say to Ruth: “Go back to your people”? Thus, Jesus tried to establish Christianity for the Gentiles—not to bring them into Judaism as converts. The disciples substituted immersion for circumcision and Sunday observance in place of Shabbat,¹⁶ for the oral Torah says about a non-Jew that he need not be circumcised nor take upon himself the obligations of the Sabbath.¹⁷

Jesus and his Jewish disciples were all circumcised and observed the Sabbath themselves; yet they did not impose all of the ritual requirements of the Torah upon the Gentiles. In this they showed their love for the nations of the world and their desire to bring them closer to the Torah. Laws such as those of *kashrut* would have been onerous to them; instead, Jesus stressed the ethical laws, the laws of morality, which are even harder to observe than the “ritual laws of Moses.” The nations of the world need these laws but the Jews do not, for they are restrained by the entire structure of *mizvot*.

Emden understands Jesus' contributions as manifold: (1) he upheld the Torah; (2) he brought the nations of the world closer to Judaism because, in reaching out to them, he flattered them and, thereby, neutralized their historical animosity and jealousy of Judaism and the Torah; and (3) he forbade them idol worship.

Where Christianity and Judaism have parted, therefore, has not been because of the teachings of Jesus, but rather, tragically, because of later Christian teachers who, unlike Jesus and his disciples, wanted to destroy the Torah of Moses. The Christian teachers mislead their followers and

16. Emden describes how their immersion and Sabbath observance were not the real thing, but were only symbolic acts. However, here, too, he is wrong in his facts. Sunday-Sabbath entered Christianity much after the time of the disciples. See J. R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World*, pp. 103–106.

17. See *Sanhedrin*, 58b, on the subject of a heathen who keeps a day of rest, i.e., who observes the Sabbath.

even teach the message of the Gospels incorrectly (i.e., the correct message is that the Gospel writers never imagined Jesus to be abrogating Judaism). These teachers should have been preaching a message of love for the descendants of Israel, as they were commanded by their own teachers. Certainly, if part of Jesus' message was that they should love their enemies, how much more so should they not love their fellow Jews?¹⁸

Emden then turns to the reality of his day. Jews and Christians are brothers, he says; the same God created us all. Most of the countries of western Europe and of Islam are righteous countries whose gentiles (uncircumcized) are wise and decent. England, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Denmark—in all of them are to be found sensible and righteous Christians who love the Jews. Why, then, do the Polish priests attack the Jews for adhering to the Torah? “The Jews pray for the welfare of all, yet the Polish priests fabricate lies and start pogroms and persecute us.” Again, Emden states, if Christians will be true to their religion, as taught by Jesus and his disciples, and will show love toward the Jews, then they will be blessed even if they do not observe the 613 *mizvot*.

This letter represents one of the most forthright vindications of Christianity extant during the pre-modern period.

II. In his responsa¹⁹ concerning the autopsy of a dog or a gentile on the Sabbath, Emden states a general conclusion about Christianity, the *umot ha'olam* of his day: All Israel considers them no longer as idol worshippers! Furthermore, we consider Christians in the category of Sons of Noah who are exempt from *shittuf*—the prohibition against associating any other name with the name of God. Thus, in holding trinitarian views, Christians are not violating this fundamental Biblical and Rabbinic category of idolatry. For Christians, *shittuf* does not imply anything less than monotheism. They are simply including intermediaries who help run the world, like those who use stars and angels in their theology. On the other hand, Emden also says that even though Christians say they believe in the unity of God and that therein they lie, nevertheless, they are not commanded to refrain from *shittuf*, so they are not transgressing.²⁰ Here, the

18. Emden does not cite Paul by name as one of those deviant teachers; he even uses Paul in a sympathetic and positive (though somewhat distorted) manner. Yet, in reality, Emden established here the modern Jewish typology of Christianity—i.e., the religion of Jesus is non-objectionable, compatible with Judaism, whilst Pauline Christianity (which the later Christian teachers spread) is off the original track and is, thereby, divisive. Here Emden set the tone for modern Jewish thinkers who sought for a handle on ecumenism and found it in none other than Jesus himself [or found it in non-Orthodox Christianity].

19. *She'elat Yavez*, (Altona, 1737), 41. The material here is probably an even more reliable measure of his real attitude toward Christianity because here he has no ax to grind; i.e., in the letter previously cited he tries to show how bereft Sabbateanism was of any moral standing in comparison even to Christianity. The classical attacks upon Christianity fade in contrast with the evils of the followers of the false messiah.

20. Katz shows how this view about *shittuf* came to be accepted. In Ex. 23:13, the passage against swearing in the name of other gods is also understood as not causing such names to be heard. In BT *Sanhedrin* 63b, a Jew is advised, therefore, not to enter into partnership with a gentile lest in litigation the gentile will be forced to take an oath in another god's name.

salient point that Emden makes is that worship of a dual godhead does not push Christianity into the category of “idolatry.”

III. In his commentary on *Pirkei Avot*,²¹ Emden describes Christianity as a “religion in the service of God,” a religion which God sees as good and, therefore, He sustains it;²² it came to spread the word of God to those who, until then, had worshipped wood and stone, who denied the existence of God altogether, who did not believe in good and evil, or in reward in the afterlife.²³ Christianity spread the notion of one God, one Ruler of all the universe who metes out justice to His creations. Christians accept the seven Noahide Laws and many other *mizvot* which they voluntarily take upon themselves. In addition to these good qualities, God also gave them prophecy through their righteous ones, and through these prophets gave them laws and commandments by which to live. Because of all this—because they met these tests of a holy community—their religion was upheld and maintained by God.

Emden continues: these two families, Christianity and Mohammedanism, which God selected as vehicles to bring faith into the world, were never brought under the yoke of *mizvot* of the Torah; their fathers never gave it to them, nor did they stand at Sinai; neither were they slaves in Egypt; therefore, they are not obligated for the 613 *mizvot* and are, thus, exempt from the prohibition of *shittuf*.

Emden concludes with the repetition of a previous theme: though some of their evil ones cause us sorrow with their violent actions and false accusations, there are righteous ones who protect us from those who rise up against the Jews, and wise ones among them who search for truth in our works and find no fault in our faithfulness to our Torah and *mizvot*.²⁴

Several centuries later, in the time of the Tosafists in France, the economic situation was such that Jews and non-Jews did a great deal of business together; such an injunction as “not causing to be heard” would lead to economic hardship. Thus, Rabbenu Tam cites his nephew, Rabbi Issac, who explains that gentiles who swear by the name of Jesus are not swearing by a strange god, but, rather, they mean to infer the same God who created heaven and earth. Since it is not forbidden to Sons of Noah to associate (*leshatef*), Jews are not transgressing the commandment against causing another to mention the name of any other god (Ex. 23:13). Under Arabic influence, however, the word *shittuf* acquired a broader connotation; in medieval philosophical literature it came to mean the duality of the godhead. This was unknown to the Tosafists who used the word in a different sense of associating a different name with the one God. When 17th and 18th century scholars studied the Tosafot, they understood the word *shittuf* to mean what the Arabic philosophers meant; they were misled into believing that the Tosafists had said it was not obligatory upon gentiles to reject the dual godhead. The Christian trinity, therefore, was not assumed to be objectionable as a non-Jewish belief. This permitted a convenient theory for those who were searching for it, to allow a tolerant attitude toward Christian theology, but to demand a rigorous monotheism as an essential of Jewish faith. Katz perceptively points out that Emden’s terminology, “*amru rabbotenu, zikhronam livrakhah* (our rabbis, of blessed memory),” indicates that he accepted this dictum of Tosafot as if it were of Talmudic origin. See *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, pp. 163–164, including footnote 1, p. 164.

21. Emden, *Ez Avot* (Amsterdam, 1751), 40b–41a.

22. In the tradition of R. Johanan the Cobbler, who said that “the future of every assembly that is for the sake of heaven is assured” (*Avot* 4:11).

23. He applies this description to Mohammedanism also.

24. This last is a reference to the Christian Hebraists. Some of them searched through

In this commentary, Emden rationalizes their faults and highlights their virtues.

IV. In a *teshuvah* to Mendelssohn, Emden points up a different issue, one dealing with salvation for those of a non-Jewish faith. Mendelssohn had written to Emden asking for Talmudic sources of Maimonides' statement "that the righteous of the world must keep the seven Noahide commandments out of belief that God commanded it in our Torah through Moses."²⁵ Mendelssohn was disturbed by the implications: that most of the people of the world will never articulate this principle of faith and are, therefore, consigned to damnation (literally, a well of destruction and a despised presence). This is especially unjust, in light of the fact that there is no specific commandment in the Torah that the nations of the world must accept the Noahide laws as of divine origin; rather, there exists only a tradition and a *midrash* for such. Further, Mendelssohn disagreed with Maimonides' critique of reason where he states that one can arrive at the truth only by tradition.²⁶

Emden, in a long *pilpulistic teshuvah*,²⁷ finds the sources for Maimonides and finds contradictory sources in the Talmud and within Maimonides as well. He does not really answer Mendelssohn's question concerning the justice of such an attitude towards *umot ha'olam*, yet, from his writing, one can infer several points: (a) there is a comparison between a Jew who performs a *mizvah* under duress, yet is still considered as having fulfilled the obligation,²⁸ and a Christian who keeps a *mizvah*, not necessarily *lishmah*, but keeps it, nevertheless. (b) Emden uses Maimonides' distinction between those who resist performing a *mizvah* because of lack of desire to engage in the act and those who resist because they deny the *mizvah* aspect, i.e., they deny God's commanding voice.²⁹ Elsewhere, Emden has stated that Christians do not deny God; one might conclude then, that here, too, Christians would not be consigned to Hell simply because they have not accepted *mizvot* (the seven Noahide commandments) as being derived-from-the-Torah. (c) Lastly, he says, just as the atonement sacrifice atones for a Jew, *zedakah*³⁰ (righteousness) atones for a gentile.

Emden's writings need no explanation; his stand is clear enough. Certainly, his attitude towards Christianity was unusually progressive, considering the tradition of enmity, theological and otherwise, between Judaism and Christianity. How did he arrive at these conclusions?

Jewish writings in order to support their anti-Semitic tendencies; others, whom Emden refers to here, are positive towards the Jews and their tradition.

25. Maimonides, *Laws of Kings*, chapter 8.

26. In *Gesammelte Schriften*, Jubilee Volume 16, pp. 178–179.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 179–183.

28. Such as one who eats *mazah* because he is compelled by others.

29. See Maimonides, *Laws of Teshuvah*, chapter 3; also *Laws of Kings*, chapter 8. He distinguishes between a *mumar* and a *mumar le-hakh'* is.

30. Here he refers to the incident of Daniel pressuring Nebuchadnezzar to give *zedakah*.

A range of motives, among them his personal dealings with Christians, can be suggested to explain his theological views. Certainly he was much indebted to the Christian authorities, especially the King of Denmark, who granted him the right to run a printing press. For him, this was not only a means of spreading his views, but it was his livelihood as well. Then, too, he was, no doubt, grateful to the Christian authorities for vindicating him in the last round of his fights with Eybeschütz, when they allowed him to return to safety in Altona after his expulsion.³¹ On the other hand, he does not hide the fact that the Jesuits were cruel to him, confiscating his father's books and presenting a sufficient danger to Jews to the extent that he would not live in Prague because of them.³² He also criticizes the Polish priests and others who persecute the Jews.³³ In other words, he was not blind to the fact that anti-Semitism still existed in Christian Europe on the eve of the Enlightenment.

Others might also point out that he was sensitive to the fact that Christian Hebraists were examining the literature of the Rabbis, searching for negative and positive signs toward Christianity.³⁴ Yet, though he was cognizant of the Christian Hebraists,³⁵ he does not hesitate, in several places, to point out what mistakes contemporary Christianity had made. Moreover, from other areas we can see that Emden was not a person who made decisions on the basis of expediency or popularity.

No; it seems that other factors beyond personal ones were more relevant. An initial one to consider—a political one—is bound up with the reality of the European Jewish community of his day. Emden was deeply immersed in his fight against the Sabbatean sect and his vendetta against Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschütz, whom he believed to be a secret follower. In his *Sefer Hashimush*, Emden sets in sharp relief the positive aspects of Christianity against a backdrop of the Sabbatai Zevi movement which he bitterly criticizes. In the comparison, Christianity emerges as a legitimate religion, while Sabbateanism is but a heresy. Were his attitudes towards Christianity not repeated elsewhere, independently, one would almost believe that he uses Christianity as the whipping boy for Sabbateanism. And even though he makes similar judgments in a neutral context elsewhere, certainly part of the motive to re-evaluate Christianity does derive from his deep-seated dread of, and disgust with, the false messianism.³⁶

31. Graetz, *History of the Jews*, Book V, pp. 265 ff.

32. Emden, *Megillat Sefer*, pp. 81 ff.; p. 93.

33. See Emden, *Sefer Hashimush*, pp. 19–20.

34. Azriel Schochet, "The Integration of German Jews Into Their Environment at the Onset of the Haskalah," *Zion* (Jerusalem), XXXI (1956): 229–233.

35. See *Ez Avot*, 41. Also, several statements in "*Resen Mat'eh*" (*Sefer Hashimush*) about Christianity are spoken in the second person, directly to the Christian reader. For example: (a) "And you, the learned and wise ones among the Christians . . ." (p. 20); (b) "And you, Christian nations, how good and how pleasant it would be if you followed the *mizvot* set forth for you by your teacher, Jesus . . ." (p. 20).

36. Although this distinction is not terribly flattering to Emden in terms of his ability to

A second factor was his great thirst for knowledge and his openness to all disciplines of the day. He studied history and geography, nature and medicine. He was aware of the new movements—capitalism and communism³⁷—and the new theologies—deism and unitarianism.

With such an openness to new trends and currents, with the ability to take them seriously enough to bring his critical faculties to bear on them, it is not surprising that Emden undertook a serious re-appraisal of Christianity as a legitimate scholarly enterprise. Nor is it surprising that he went directly to the primary sources—the New Testament—the study of which undoubtedly was considered out of bounds by his contemporaries.

A third factor was Emden's sensitivity to the currents of social change: Jews and Christians began to have more contact with each other; *ipso facto*, a new pluralism was emerging out of medieval isolationism.

It began with the economic interchange between Jews and Christians. The by-product of such exchanges—an increased personal and social contact—forced Jews to rethink stereotypical categories of Christians. Rabbinic leaders cautioned the people to treat gentiles ethically in business. In the 16th century, Rabbi Solomon Luria had written a famous responsum, admonishing his fellow Jews not to rob a gentile; this is forbidden, he wrote, not only because it will lead to *hillul haShem*, but also because a man should keep himself from ugly deeds.³⁸ At the popular level, some Jews felt that there should be no constraints in their dealings with Christians, since they had been so badly treated at Christian hands. As the opportunities for interaction increased, injunctions such as Luria's were repeated with ever greater frequency.

Emden's understanding of history led him to stress the idea of living in peace with the nations in whose shade Jews found themselves: "In their peace will be our peace . . . Therefore, we should pray for their welfare . . . These nations living in Europe in the 18th century are not descendants of the Romans or Babylonians and therefore are not guilty of destroying the Temple . . ."³⁹ In Emden we see the beginning signs of a real appreciation of the nation in which he lived. This social awareness of the "other" was, undoubtedly, the first step towards a theological reassessment of the gentiles' religion. And just as Christianity was beginning to move towards a rejection of theological stereotypes of Jews, so, too, traditional notions of *goyim* were to come under scrutiny.

separate scholarship and politics (or religion and politics), nonetheless, at least he maintains his integrity by setting forth his views under no false pretext.

37. He wrote about these movements in his responsa. Schochet (*Op. cit.*, p. 225) writes that Emden was the first Jew to deal with communism. Emden even states that Aplatón took this idea from the Rabbis: "What is mine is mine, what is yours is yours; this is a measure of Sodom." Emden also says that the Essenes were wrong in not heeding the principle, "Do not separate yourself from the community," yet were correct in the concept of sharing. Universally adopted, this (communist) idea of the Essenes would put an end to jealousy and hatred in the world.

38. Rabbi Solomon Luria, *Yam Shel Shlomo*, on B.K. 10:20, as cited in Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, p. 159.

39. Emden, *Ez Avot*, 47.

Fourth, we must acknowledge the quiet presence of internal influences. Over and above these historical and temporal factors, there were traditional ones which affected/contributed to, his new attitude. True, the majority of traditional opinions towards Christianity still viewed Christianity as *avodah zarah*;⁴⁰ true, also, the general structure of the laws was geared towards separation;⁴¹ yet, throughout the medieval period there was a small but significant body of Jewish scholars who held Christianity in a positive light. The Tosafists removed Christians from the category of idol worshippers in limited and specific halakhic decisions that were economically expedient. Menachem HaMeiri, of the 14th century, carried these halakhic decisions to their theological conclusions⁴² and granted to Christianity a positive religious status. Other single voices, such as Rabbi Moshe Rivkes, (d. 1671/72) supported the Meiri. In his comment on *akum*,⁴³ Rivkes stated that *akum* does not apply to Christianity:

The Rabbis said this in relation to the pagans of their own times only, who worshipped stars and the constellations and did not believe in the Exodus or in *creatio ex nihilo*. But the peoples in whose shade we, the people of Israel, are exiled and amongst whom we are dispersed do in fact believe in *creatio ex nihilo* and in the Exodus and in the main principles of religion, and their whole aim and intent is to the Maker of heaven and earth, as the codifiers have written . . . Far, then, from our not being forbidden to save them, we are, on the contrary, obliged to pray for their welfare, and as Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi wrote at length on the Passover Haggadah, concerning the sentence "Pour out thy wrath upon the peoples who have not known thee" (Psalms 79:6), "it was King David, peace be upon him, who prayed to God to pour out His wrath on the heathen who did not believe in *creatio ex nihilo* and in the signs and wonders which God, blessed be He, performed for us in Egypt, and at the giving of the Torah. But the Gentiles, in whose shadow we live and under whose wings we shelter, believe in all these things, as I have written;" hence, we stand on guard to pray continually for the welfare and success of the kingdom and the ministers, for all the states and places over which they rule; and, indeed, Maimonides ruled, in concurrence with Rabbi Joshua (BT, *Sanhedrin*, 105a), that the pious of the Gentile nations, too, have a portion in the world to come.⁴⁴

This passage is strikingly similar to those of Jacob Emden. Because the time was ripe for it and because Emden was independent enough to go against the contemporary prevailing views, he modeled his views on Christianity after those of a liberal thinker.

40. Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, chapters 3 and 4.

41. For example: strict injunctions against intermarriage, against socializing, against eating together.

42. Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, pp. 114–128.

43. On the question of who may or may not be saved when in danger, see *Shulhan Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat*, 425, 5. This same question raised great controversy in the early 70s, and Chief Rabbi Unterman responded to it. Although his reasons were not quite as religiously tolerant as those of Meiri, Rivkes or Emden, he found a way, nevertheless, of accommodating a new interpretation based on *darkhei shalom*.

44. Rabbi Moshe Rivkes, *Be'er Ha'golah*, commentary on *Shulhan Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat*, 425, 5. Quoted from Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, p. 165. [Source citation in Katz is a misprint.]

And last, one can attribute to Emden an assessment of Christianity based solely on its own merits; by this I mean one unconnected to history and recriminations. Emden evaluated Christianity on its own terms, in its ideal form. He perceived it as a religion of love whose intent was to achieve, albeit by a different mode, a goal held in common with Judaism—the betterment of the human race.⁴⁵

Because of his great integrity and commitment to the truth, Emden saw fit to cut the issue to the bone, to analyze the Christian faith critically, to sound the merits of the other faith when it so warranted. He was able to do so, despite his full awareness of the fact that in every generation Jews had suffered at the hands of Christian might and unchecked power. Perhaps he was able to do so because of his deep commitment to Judaism, his unflinching, uncompromising fidelity to all of its precepts. His was not a light-headed response, a lack of faith or a simple-minded acceptance. In *Sefer Hashimush* he writes that he investigated and deeply analyzed his own religion and emerged from that process a more true and faithful Jew.

Emden could assay Christianity and all of its virtues without ever being the least bit attracted to it. Beyond that, he was careful to separate the intrinsic value of Christianity for gentiles from the influence of Christian practices upon Judaism. For example, in the question of polygamy, he criticized Rabbenu Gershom's stand for no other reason than that it was *hukkat hagoyim*, an aping of gentile customs. Similarly, when Mendelssohn wrote to him to find halakhic support for delayed burial, Emden would in no way deviate from Jewish law, despite pressure from the authorities to adopt an expedient Christian practice.

In many ways, Emden set the model for Jewish-Christian relations in the modern period. Mendelssohn was influenced by him; the Jewish notables of France relied on his work in formulating their answers to Napoleon's 12 questions, several of which dealt with the Jewish stance on Christianity; and, in examining Buber's thought some 200 years later, one can well see many similarities to Emden's. Indeed, Emden did establish the ideal construct for Jewish-Christian attitudes today: an attitude in which there is mutual respect and pluralism, where Judaism need not denigrate Christianity to validate itself, yet where Jews must learn, especially in this modern period of assimilation, to say that Christianity is for gentiles and Judaism is for Jews. Respect can be given even as the lines are drawn deep and firm. All too often, Jews today think that they must yield to Christianity and to Christian mores in order to show their tolerance. From the great scholar, Rabbi Jacob Emden, we can learn that religious toleration and true cultural pluralism best grow out of a climate of love and total faithfulness to one's own religion and traditions.

45. Oscar Z. Fasman, "Epistle on Toleration from an Enlightened Zealot," in Leo Jung, ed., *Judaism in a Changing World*.

The Zionist Thought of Ben Halpern

SHARON MULLER

MORE THAN AN HISTORIAN OF THE ZIONIST movement, Ben Halpern, author of *The Idea of the Jewish State* and presently professor of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University, is a contemporary Zionist ideologue who has attempted to update and refine the Zionist analyses and messages of Yehezkel Kaufmann, Ber Borochov, A.D. Gordon, and Berl Katznelson, with the help of the analytical tools of modern American sociology. Thus, Halpern seeks to legitimate Zionism in the eyes of American liberal academics and, more important, to revive its influence within the rapidly acculturating American Jewish community.

For Halpern, the essence of the Zionist analysis was, and remains, the linked phenomena of Jewish alienation and activism, the second being the result or effect of the first. Jewish alienation, according to him, has been the central feature of Jewish life and history since the rise of Christianity and is embodied in the most powerful of Jewish myths, the myth of *galut*. Halpern places the uniquely Jewish notion of *galut* at the heart of his sociological analysis of American Jewry, for it is his feeling that the degeneration of Jewish life in America is a result of the lost consciousness, or the deliberate denial, on the part of American Jews, of the fundamental alienness of the Jewish people. It is his desire to reawaken in his fellow American Jews of the second, third, and fourth generations this sense of alienhood, of living in *galut*, so that, like their forebears of Eastern Europe, they might be roused to Zionist activism, to the will for redemption.

However, Halpern's view of post-exilic Jewish society and culture and of the post-exilic Jew—read Israeli society and the Israeli Jew—gets lost in his elaborate analysis of the Jewish situation, particularly the American Jewish situation, in *galut*, and in his concern with the reawakening of *galut* consciousness so that *galut* might be overcome by Zionism.

Halpern refers to himself as a secular Socialist-Zionist and seems to believe that his analyses of the traditional Jewish community, the origin and development of anti-Semitism, the role of Zionism, and the sociological situation of American Jews and Judaism are within that tradition.¹ Indeed, his strongly Labor Zionist background would suggest that this is

1. "Labor Zionism for Today," *Jewish Frontier*, 37 (July/August, 1970): 6.

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the case. His parents were Socialist Zionists and, as a youth, he himself became quite active in Habonim. He went on to become national secretary of the Hehalutz Organization of America while still in his twenties, and finally, after having earned his Ph.D. in sociology at Harvard, joined the editorial staff of American Labor Zionism's leading periodical, *The Jewish Frontier*. He served as its managing editor from 1943 to 1949, during the turbulent years of the Holocaust and the rise of the State of Israel. Socialist Zionism, however, forms only a part of Halpern's Zionist thought. Central to his viewpoint are the conclusions of Yehezkel Kaufmann's *Golah V'Nekhar*, which Halpern uses as a basis for his full-blown analysis of the contemporary situation of American Jewry.

Halpern's analysis of the American Jewish problem begins with an examination of the traditional relationship between Jews and non-Jews. Adopting Kaufmann's thesis, Halpern claims that the source of the tension between Jews and non-Jews and, hence, of anti-Semitism, lies in the very nature of the religious commitment of the Jew.² Kaufmann views anti-Semitism as a universal response to Judaism and its specific history, believing that the monotheistic faith of the defeated Jewish people necessarily evokes hostility. He explains that Judaism, whose central idea is monotheism, is a universalistic creed. As such, it engenders in the believer a disdain for non-believers and a universal conversionist drive, but, as a politically defeated and exiled people, Jews have never been in a position to make large-scale conversions. Thus, the universalistic creed of Judaism is doomed to remain the exclusive faith of a small minority nationality, the Jews. This historic fatality, which binds the Jews and Judaism in an exclusive union, consolidates the Chosen People as an ideologically recalcitrant minority and sows the seed of Gentile antagonism toward them.³

Accepting Kaufmann's analysis, Halpern concludes that what defines a Jew is not the attitudes and stereotypes of outsiders, as Sartre and Lenin believe, but a Jew's faith and his identification with the national group and its special destiny. Thus, the tension between Jews and non-Jews is ideological in nature and unavoidable so long as Jews persist as Jews.⁴

From Kaufmann, then, Halpern derives his definition of Jewish authenticity. He sees it as the unity of the Jewish people in its fundamental alienation from Christian (and Islamic) civilization and its unified ideological opposition to the dominant world cultures. This traditional stance of the Jewish people is embodied in their religion and in their specific history, and was preserved in their ghettoized communities in the West until the period of Emancipation, and until the last two decades of the nineteenth century in the East. The Jewish people were able to maintain this segregationist and oppositionalist stance during the years of their

2. "Anti-Semitism in the Perspective of Jewish History," in Charles H. Stember, *The Jews in the Mind of America* (New York, 1966), p. 275.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 278

4. *Ibid.*

exile from Zion not only because of the external pressures that were exerted by the Church and secular authorities, but, more importantly, because of the strength of the Jewish religio-cultural institutions which were flexible yet firm enough to preserve Jewish unity and solidarity. Halpern points to Jewish ritual, prayer, communal law, schools, the Hebrew language, the interdependence of Jewish intellectuals and the Jewish masses, and, finally, to the Jewish historical, eschatological myth of Exile and Redemption as the elements of Jewish communal life which have preserved the unique character and unity of the Jewish people.⁵

In the wake of the Enlightenment and Emancipation, however, the unifying basis of traditional Jewish life in Europe was undermined.

Not only was the uniformity of Jewish religious practice and the universality of Jewish communal organization now challenged, but the transmission of Jewish culture, which supported the whole structure of traditional Jewish unity, became increasingly ineffective.⁶

New ideologies arose in response to the new conditions faced by European Jewry. Zionism, which grew up only in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, was one of these, and Halpern views it as that post-Enlightenment Jewish ideology which best embodies and preserves the premises of the Jewish consensus—"the unspoken belief that however defined or constituted . . . the Jews throughout the world [share] a common heritage and destiny, and their problems [are] a single responsibility"⁷—and which is best able to maintain the traditional oppositionist stance of the Jewish people vis-à-vis the Christian civilization in which they dwell.

Like Kaufmann, Halpern seems to regard the messianic expectation embodied in Zionism as the ultimate expression of the will of the Jews to remain aliens, of their historical-ethnic unity, and of their social distinctiveness. Thus, though *mizug galuyot* (the ingathering of the exiles) in Zion will mark the overcoming of *galut*, it will not mean the end of *galut* consciousness, for, to Halpern, this consciousness forms the basis of Jewish communal existence.

What Halpern takes from the Socialist-Zionist tradition and seeks to adapt to the American Jewish context is the *galut* world-view and the activist orientation of the Eastern European Socialist Zionists. It is what he terms the "will to sovereignty" or what Yudkah, of Hazaz's *The Sermon*, calls the desire to become the subject of one's own history, that Halpern takes as the legacy of Socialist Zionism. This *galut*-activist model seems to have been the inspiration behind his theoretical sociology, encapsulated in the twinned concepts of myth and ideology.

5. *The Idea of the Jewish State* (Cambridge Mass; 1961), p. 5.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 9

7. "Zionist Ideas"—Letter to the Editor of *Commentary*, *Commentary*, 33 (May, 1962).

Having taken his doctorate work in sociology at Harvard at the time when the work of Talcott Parsons was coming into vogue, Halpern seems to have been considerably influenced by the latter's functionalist approach. But, as a Zionist, adhering to the Zionist ideology of change and rebellion against the status quo, Halpern could not fully reconcile himself to Parsons' functionalist theory, which stressed the fundamental stability of societies and interpreted the actions and cultures of individuals and of groups in terms of their functional role in contributing to the maintenance of stability in the wider society. Thus, Halpern concluded that what was lacking in Parsons' "General Theory of Action" was an examination of the dynamic tendencies of culture, and the dynamic relationship which, historically, existed between culture and social systems.⁸ It was Halpern's intention to develop a systematic "historical sociology" which, while deriving from certain aspects of Parsons' "General Theory of Action," reintroduced the possibility of change into sociological analysis.⁹

In a lengthy article entitled "The Dynamic Elements of Culture" (*Ethics*, LXV, 1955), he explains his concepts of myth and ideology. Drawing on a wide range of anthropological, philosophical, and sociological sources, Halpern sketches two contrasting types of thought systems which he regards as important in analyzing the relationship between culture and human action. Mythological systems focus upon mythical, poetic images which represent an "archetypal experience" of relevance to the individual and to the collective life of a group. Myths are symbolic representations of profound insights into the nature of life processes, and the reenactment of myth in the form of ritual is, thus, a source of inspiration and identification for the individual within the group. Myths remind man of very general struggles, of paradoxes and goals of the human situation, yet these are so broadly defined as to have little significance in terms of social change. Mythical thought acts to organize group experience, to give pattern and meaning to varied experiences of group life. Because of their poetic and indefinite nature, mythical images can be re-interpreted to conform with changing material or social pressures upon a group. Mythical systems are, thus, strategies of adjustment par excellence—they are reactive, not dynamic.

Ideologies arise when intellectuals of a group transform the symbols of myth into definite terms. This transformation of pliable myth into specific assertions about reality entails predictions about the future and, therefore, requires social action by members of the group. While myths interpret whatever happens, ideologies "predict . . . what ought to happen,"¹⁰ and, hence, require action by the group. Thus, ideological thought is historically dynamic, and "only with the rise of ideological

8. "The Dynamic Elements of Culture," *Ethics*, LXV, (July, 1955): 236.

9. "History, Sociology, and Contemporary Area Studies," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXIII, (July, 1957): 2.

10. "The Dynamic Elements of Culture:" 241.

divisions have we crossed the threshold of history."¹¹ Differing systems of myth—because they disagree about poetic images which are open to varying interpretations—can be reconciled. Differing ideologies—because they entail specific beliefs or ideals—are self-imposing and exclusivist, since other groups are “followers of falsehood.”¹²

In several articles which appeared in *The Jewish Frontier* and in his latest book, *Jews and Blacks* (New York, 1971), Halpern applies his theoretical sociology to America's two most unassimilated minority groups, the Jews and the Blacks. He chooses to compare and contrast them because he believes them to represent most closely the two ideal-types of a mythological and ideological cultural group.¹³ The Blacks, as he sees them, are a mythological minority. Though they are in some degree in conflict with the dominant culture, their conflict of values is only mythic, since both groups live within a consensus fully defined by the same ideology.¹⁴ Even the subjugated social position of the Black minority has not lead them to create an ideological opposition. Rather, the minority subculture developed a folklore of its own which represented a mythic variant of the dominant culture.¹⁵ The Jews, on the other hand, most closely represent the ideal type of the ideological minority with a value system that, from the outset, was in fundamental opposition to that of the dominant culture. Unlike the case of mythic conflict, when the value conflict is ideological, the logic of the situation requires an absolute victory of one side over the other.¹⁶ If the complete suppression of either side cannot be achieved, then one of two situations may arise: there may be a contract of peaceful coexistence, providing for the government of each side by its own consensus, or the dominant culture may grant to the ideological minority a tolerated status, meaning that the minority can live by its own consensus within the limits defined by the consensus of the dominant ideology.¹⁷ As in the case of the Jews, when peace and toleration prevail between the dominant and dissident ideologies, the minority group lives partially outside the consensus of the larger community, by whose members it is often regarded as, in some degree, alien.¹⁸

A second basic difference between mythological and ideological groups relates to the position and role of intellectuals within the minority. An ideological minority, such as the Jews, has its own intellectuals who function within their own independent consensus and have an authentic relationship of interdependence with the masses of their community. A mythic minority, such as the Blacks, does not usually, though it may, have

11. Ibid., p. 242.

12. Ibid.

13. “Two Types of Minority Americans,” *Jewish Frontier*, 38, (January, 1971): 7.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

an intellectual group. When such an intellectual group does exist it generally consists of marginal men who lean more toward the dominant culture than toward their own.¹⁹ This difference may be attributed to the fact that, unlike a mythic minority, an ideological one depends on the effective activity of an intellectual class—its formulation and defense of an independent consensus—for its survival as an independent group.²⁰

The final difference between mythological and ideological groups lies in their sense of history. Adopting Croce's definition that only that which man has freely, rationally, and actively created is historic, Halpern postulates that only an ideological group can be historic because it alone can be creative freely, rationally, and actively. By contrast, the creations of a mythological group are repressed, non-rational, and based on passive reaction. The Blacks, a long-repressed social group having no contact with their home or their culture of origin for hundreds of years, can have no real sense of their own history. The Jews, however, have a refined sense of history inherent in their ideology. "But the aching paradox of their life in the Diaspora is that they were so little able to create it fully, actively, and rationally."²²

On the basis of his definition of the Jewish people as an ideological minority, Halpern criticizes the present tendencies of American Jews and Judaism. What he objects to—and is distressed by—is the attempt of American Jews and the new America-oriented religious ideologies to deny the reality of *galut* and, hence, to shed their oppositionalist, activist orientation. Translated into Halpern's sociological terms, American Jews are seeking to deny or to repress the ideological nature of the Jewish group and to become (he would say "reduce themselves to") a mere mythological minority.

The Jewish problem in America, according to Halpern, is defined, as it is everywhere, by the basic situation of Jewish exile and fundamental alienhood.²³ This situation cannot be overcome because Jews can never be fully integrated into American society and culture. The American tradition is Protestantism and Jews cannot, and do not, share its openness and permeability. Moreover, the fact that the American way is a Christian way of life means that Jews are looked upon as aliens, for Christian tradition regards Jews as a people rejected by God who must eventually disappear when God lets them be reconciled to Him. Halpern claims that this view of Jews is what makes Christians Christian.

... no Jew, once he faces the question, can fail to understand how inconceivable it would be for a Christian to remain a Christian if he had to give up his belief that the Jews are a people rejected of God.²⁴

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p. 8.

21. Ibid., p. 9.

22. Ibid.

23. *The American Jew* (New York, 1956), p. 46.

24. Ibid., p. 56.

Jews will remain strangers, he states, because "Without a common language of allusion and reference in which to carry on business affairs and ordinary social relations, there is always distrust and hypersensitivity."²⁵

Jewish alienhood became a more serious problem for the second generation American Jew.

He had fought free of the immigrant ghetto—but far from having entered the authentic core of America, he found himself in a new, invisible ghetto. He knew, of course, that this peculiar twist of fate had something to do with his Jewishness. But he had dropped so much cultural luggage in his escape from the ghetto that he had very little idea any longer what Jewishness—and particularly *his* Jewishness—really consisted in.²⁶

Pressures upon the native American Jew to rediscover his Jewishness, such as the brute fact of the Jewish community's existence, the desire to justify to oneself one's choice to remain a Jew rather than to convert, and the Gentiles' insistence that Jews constitute a distinct and separate group, seemed to have brought about a "revival" of Jewish religion and Jewish culture. Because native American Jews were often without the Jewish learning needed to appreciate their own authentic culture and because

Judaism also [appeared] as the public facade that the Jews [presented] to America. . . . there [was] the tendency to present the essentials of Judaism in such a selection and emphasis as [would] underscore the "Judeo-Christian consensus," with its peculiarly American importance.²⁷

This compulsion to Americanize Judaism and to emphasize the "Judeo-Christian consensus" is what disturbs Halpern about the new American Jewish religious ideologies. He points out that there is a fundamental incompatibility between an Americanized Judaism and the core ideas of traditional Judaism, namely, exile and alienhood and the distinction and chosenness of the Jewish people.²⁸ Thus, according to him, any Jewish ideology that bases itself on the belief that Judaism is truly at home in America must necessarily be inauthentic, because any version of Judaism which tries to dispense with the concepts of exile and redemption is attempting a divorce from the central historic experience of the Jewish people.²⁹

In a rather bitter article entitled "Apologia Contra Rabbines," he accuses American Conservative Judaism of attempting

to redefine Judaism as a cult, to make it over into an intelligently engineered

25. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

28. *Ibid.*

29. "Apologia Contra Rabbines," in A. Cohen, *Arguments and Doctrines*, (New York, 1970), p. 383.

curriculum for training in piety, [and] to reduce it to the scale of experience of no more than the contemporary synagogue . . .³⁰

The new religious ideology is, in Halpern's view, a piece of socio-cultural engineering rather than a process of authentic culture, for

When men turn from old to the unexplored new [in a] process of authentic culture . . . they leave intact what they reject and they simply burst beyond its bounds along a line of flight contained potentially within the parent mass.³¹

Not only is the new religious ideology of Conservative Judaism, in Halpern's view, an assault upon his past, it excludes, in principle, all secularists like himself.³²

. . . the new ideology operates with a precisely defined objective and a rigorous method: to cut and trim Jewish religious culture to a cult whose doctrines and practices can be shown by experimental evidence and logical inference to conduce to the attachment of the average American Jew to his synagogue.³³

Halpern thus opposes Conservative Judaism as a divisive force within the American Jewish community, not only because it denies basic elements that make up the traditional Jewish consensus, but because the narrowness and rigidity of its definition of Jewish belief alienates and excludes large groups of Jews.

Lastly, Halpern criticizes the America-oriented religious ideologies for their part in the reduction of Jewish religion to a mere compartment of life. Halpern claims that only where

Jewish segregation broke down and the average Jew shared a major part of his life with Gentiles, [did] Jewish religion [become] a separate compartment of life and culture and [lose its] integral relation with the Jews' secular values.³⁴

Halpern rejects both neo-Orthodoxy and the Left-wing progressive approaches to Judaism—which claim to transform symbolic Jews into real Jews by restoring a context of Jewish ethnic culture—as too philo-American and unconscious of the condition of *galut*. He concludes, thus, that an authentic Jewish religious culture can develop only in Israel, for only in a community whose secular life is Jewish can Jewish religious culture find a true secular expression.³⁵

As should be evident from the previous discussion, Halpern's analysis

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., p. 394.

32. Ibid., p. 383.

33. Ibid., p. 385.

34. *The American Jew*, p. 143.

35. Ibid., p. 147.

is organized around basic antinomies arising from, and relevant to, the Jewish experience of *galut*. These antinomies may be graphically represented as follows:

<i>Positive</i>	<i>vs</i>	<i>Negative</i>
Alienation leading to activism		Comfort leading to passive acceptance
Self-affirmation		Acceptance of "others" view of oneself
Ideology (rebellion)		Myth (accommodation)
Zionism		American religious Judaism
Consensus		Fragmentation
Sovereignty (subjects of one's history)		Dominatedness (objects of one's history)

There exists an internal contradiction which pervades all aspects of Halpern's thought and that is presumably responsible for his failure to answer seemingly crucial questions—the adoption by a professed secularist Zionist of the traditional Jewish myth of *galut* as the core idea of the Jewish people. The first question raised by this underlying contradiction is: "How can the myth of *galut*, which is inextricably rooted in the Jewish belief in God and in His involvement in the world, have any validity for a Jew who does not believe in God?" If *galut* is only a reflection of the reality of the Jewish experience in the Gentile world, how can it be used as the defining characteristic of Jewish life? (*Galut* is only the husk protecting the kernel, it is not the kernel itself.) And, if Jews have no particular essence to preserve, why should they be required to feel alienated if they do, indeed, feel comfortable within the Gentile society in which they dwell?

Furthermore, if the essence of Jewish life in the twentieth century, after the collapse of traditional religious authority, is consciousness of *galut*, then, by applying the Zionist solution one has overcome the central problem of the Jewish people—but, at the same time, left it without a *raison d'être* and without a normative view of Jewish life. Halpern's preoccupation with ideological rebellion leads him to overlook the necessity of confronting the problem of what should be the *content* of Jewish life—whether in America or in Israel.

Another problem in Halpern's analysis concerns his identification with the Eastern European Socialist-Zionists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In virtually every article and larger work that he has written, Halpern refers to himself emphatically as a secular, *Socialist-Zionist* and to his analysis as a product of that tradition. But, of what significance is his socialism, and what is its role in American Jewish or Israeli society? Of this Halpern speaks painfully little. Judging from his

published writings in English, Halpern has very little to say about socialism in Israel, and it seems significant that among his many articles there is not one on the topic of the Israeli economy.

Nor does Jewish socialism in the American context seem to mean more, for Halpern, than the pursuit of Jewish economic self-interest and the democratic reorganization of the American Jewish community. In an article entitled "Labor Zionism for Today" on the applicability of the Socialist-Zionist analysis of the Poale-Zion for contemporary Jewry, he writes,

Poale-Zion skepticism about the possibility of a Jewish proletarian socialism in the Diaspora has been more than borne out by events. And it remains profoundly true that a political movement based on interest is more reliable, rationally calculable, and likely to be historically productive than one based on sentiment, however idealistic. . . . [I]t is part of the traditional wisdom of Poale-Zion ideology that only partial and provisional political activity can be effectively pursued in the Diaspora. In America our ideological attack on the existing Jewish establishment has been and will evidently continue to be, restricted to the question of community organization.³⁶

Thus, Halpern's socialism, if based on the socialist tradition of the Poale-Zion, is a considerably watered-down version.

By calling into question the Jewish authenticity of those who would recast Judaism into an Americanized mold—be it that of ethnicity or pietistic religion—Halpern has presented a challenge to American Jewry to reconsider the desirability of its Americanizing tendencies. He has attempted to distill the essence of Jewish consciousness from Jewish history, to express it in social scientific terms and, in so doing, he translates the message of Eastern European Socialist-Zionism into an American idiom. From the historical observation of Judaism as ideological—from the Jew's realization of his alienhood in exile and the need to overcome it—he derives the normative imperative, "Be ideological!" as the hallmark of Jewish authenticity.

If Halpern has failed to provide a vision or blueprint of a revitalized Jewish culture, he has, nevertheless, delivered a powerful exhortation to the complacent American Jew not to abandon the consciousness of *galut*.

36. *Jewish Frontier*, July/August, 1970.

REVIEWS

***Ahavah* Could Be The Solution**

Love and Sex: A Modern Jewish Perspective. By ROBERT GORDIS. New York. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc., 1978. \$8.95

Reviewed by ANNE LAPIDUS LERNER

IN *Love and Sex: A Modern Jewish Perspective*, Robert Gordis tackles some of the most difficult issues confronting persons in this age, and discusses them from a Jewish point of view. Marriage and divorce, birth control, abortion, pre-marital and extra-marital sex, homosexuality, and intermarriage are among the topics considered. A chapter is also devoted to the tangential issue of women in Judaism. The work is informed by the author's intelligence, concern, and wide-ranging expertise.

Setting his discussion in the framework of the contemporary crisis in morality, Gordis faces issues both broader and deeper than the ostensible subject of the book. This procedure has the advantage of avoiding both the vacuum and the vacuity which might have resulted from a discussion of love and sex alone. As he contends, the new standards being applied to sexual morality are part of broad changes in society, including, but not limited to, the reorganization of the family.

Particularly astute is his analysis of the influence of the Christian dichotomy between *eros* and *agape* upon the new sexual morality. Gordis suggests that the traditional Pauline emphasis on sexless love is the other side of today's emphasis on loveless sex. Thus, the dehumanizing of relationships which is endemic today is an outgrowth of the Christian morality against which it constitutes a rebellion. The

Jewish view of love and sex as intertwined in the one word *ahavah* is proposed as an approach to a solution.

In dealing with specific issues, Gordis is often interesting and reasonable. One hopes that he will also be persuasive, but that task, in light of the overwhelming strength of countervailing forces, is much more difficult. His concept of legally permitting acts like abortion, while ethically restricting them, is ideal, but probably also too idealistic. The ethical guidelines are nicely drawn, but one really needs a major overhaul of society to implement them. A world which regularly flouts legal restrictions can hardly be expected to abide by ethical constraints. Gordis is understanding of the human frailties which result in widespread social problems. When discussing adultery, for example, despite the fact that, as he indicates, it is the only sexual offense mentioned in the Decalogue, he urges softening strict rabbinic law and following, instead, the customary law which, in the case of the prophet Hosea, had room for reconciliation. As a device around the rabbinic penalties imposed upon a *mamzer*, the illegitimate offspring of an adulterous union, Gordis suggests that a technical judgment of adultery needs the presence of witnesses who first warn the parties that what they are about to do is against Jewish law. Since there are almost never such witnesses to adulterous intercourse, questions of legitimacy can be dismissed.

The question of homosexuality, too, is treated with concern for individuals and Jewish law's rejection of homosexuality as acceptable sexual behavior. Thus, Gordis rejects "gay" synagogues, while welcoming individual Jewish

homosexuals and lesbians into Jewish institutions as brothers and sisters. Occasionally, as, for example, when he concedes that "Wilde is by no means the only example of talent or genius to be found among homosexuals" (p. 152), he seems a bit condescending. On balance, however, the chapter is a praiseworthy attempt to maintain traditional norms without sacrificing human concern.

It is in assessing the problems of pre-marital and non-marital sex that Gordis is less than compassionate. In fact, he does not seem ready to deal with the problem in its broad scope. He speaks of the surreptitiousness involved in unmarried couples' living together at a time when many couples find no need to hide such relationships. They announce them in print, buy houses together, and sometimes even join synagogues together. Clearly, behavior need not be condoned just because it is widespread, but there is good rabbinic precedent for trying to find a legal way of justifying prevalent behavior in order not to enact laws by which the community cannot abide. Indeed, past rabbinic attempts to apply the concubine principle to non-marital, pre-marital, and extra-marital sexual relations were attempts to legitimize existant behavioral norms. The issue of non-marital and pre-marital sexual relations is treated more fully in *Choosing a Sex Ethic* by Eugene B. Borowitz, who devotes a whole volume to this issue, offering a fairly complete discussion of the halakhic material, followed by a careful delineation of different ethical criteria which might be applied. Although his own conclusion is much the same as Gordis', Borowitz gives enough information to enable others to reach different conclusions using different criteria.

The disparity between Gordis and Borowitz raises the question of

the audience to which each volume is directed. Borowitz addresses himself primarily to persons faced with making these decisions. For him, the conclusions reached are less important than is the process of reaching them. Gordis' book is directed toward a much wider audience,—not only persons making choices, but, also, persons trying to understand the decisions of others. This is most clear in the chapter on homosexuality where Gordis speaks almost exclusively of reactions and not of decisions.

The weakest chapter in the book is the one devoted to Women in Jewish Law and Life. While Gordis lauds the role of the Biblical matriarchs, significant though they were, they were not the equals of their husbands. In fact, there is not one woman in the Bible sufficiently important for us to know her birth and death. The issue of customary law in the Biblical and Talmudic periods is fascinating but it does not actually ameliorate the condition of women today because it is not integrated into normative halakhah. Gordis mentions the fact that *yibbum*, levirate marriage, is not practised in Judaism, but he leaves the erroneous impression that *halizah* has also been eliminated.

The problem of the *agunah*, the abandoned wife, is not resolved even in the State of Israel, where the penalty of imprisonment does not move all recalcitrant husbands to divorce their wives. Clearly, the picture of women in Jewish law is bleaker than it would appear from this study. Finally, it is my impression that Professor Gordis does not fully realize the pervasiveness of changes, large and small, in marriage. When discussing a woman's changing her name upon marriage, he mentions neither that a woman's Hebrew name does not change nor that names are less frequently changed these days. In discussing divorce, he does not refer

to the concept of joint custody. He does not come to grips with the long and recurrent periods of singleness which are often part of today's life pattern. Is a thirty-five year old divorcee subject to the same sexual restraints as a seventeen year old? We need to consider fully the new realities and to develop an ethic to cope with them.

In sum, the book is both interesting and useful but sometimes disappointing. Written by a person of impeccable credentials, whose advocacy of liberalizing the place of women in Judaism dates back at least as far as the editing of the Conservative *Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book*, published in 1946, it is a long overdue discussion of the issues. One hopes that it will have an impact, inspiring further discussion and new responses.

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Two Zionist Memoirs

In the Arena, an Autobiographical Memoir. By EMANUEL NEUMANN. New York. Herzl Press. \$10.00.

Dual Allegiance. By BEN DUNKELMAN, foreword by Yitzhak Rabin. New York. Crown Publishers. \$8.95.

Reviewed by JOEL CARMICHAEL

EMANUEL NEUMANN, no doubt the most outstanding Zionist in America, has written an unusually lively, frank and arrestingly readable memoir of his life or, rather, of his career in the Zionist movement. In his case the two are much the same: from his infancy on he was brought up to a total identification

with the Jewish rebirth at the end of the last century.

Written throughout in a tone of sober, fairminded understatement, Neumann's book is surely one of the seminal memoirs of the Zionist movement. At the age of 84, Neumann looks back over the turbulence that the Zionist movement was steeped in from its inception—from the struggle that it waged in Eastern Europe against all the other major forces in Jewish life, old-fashioned Orthodoxy on the one hand and the nascent Socialist movement on the other, to its still more difficult fight in Western Europe and America against the forces of assimilation and the venom of self-hating and/or established Jews.

Born into a scholarly Litvak family in 1893, Neumann was brought to this country as an infant; reared in one of the first Zionist families to follow Ben Yehudah's lead in actually speaking modern Hebrew in the family, he entered the Zionist movement as a matter of course. It was his natural habitat—as he says, "the air he breathed."

His rise within that movement was equally natural: not only scholarly; he revealed remarkable energies focused by an unusual organizational ability. For years he was to be chairman of the American section of the Jewish Agency, as well as chief of the Department of Public Relations and Political Action for the Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs. After the Second World War he was to found the Herzl Institute, together with the Herzl Press and *Midstream* magazine.

Perhaps the most absorbing part of Neumann's memoir is his account of the great rift in the Zionist movement that rotated around the question of Zionism's very goal. In his personal experience the rift emerged against the background of a smaller one—the ousting of

Justice Louis D. Brandeis by the allies of Chaim Weizmann, notably the "Lipsky group." Neumann's treatment of this conflict is marked by his usual balance, though he makes his own affinities with the Brandeis entourage quite clear. Essentially, the Brandeis defeat was a result of his remoteness from the day-to-day hurly-burly of the American Jewish scene; the "Lipsky group" was finally swept into authority by a "grass-roots" initiative. Neumann is fairminded enough to recognize this, though he does so, I have the impression, with a tinge of regret that Brandeis's remarkable talents were more or less lost to Zionism after his ouster in 1921.

But this rift was merely a prelude to the much greater division in the World Zionist movement on the goal of the movement itself. Here the split, broadly speaking, was between Weizmann and the Labor Zionists, on the one hand, and the Revisionists Zionists on the other, led by the brilliant thinker and speaker Vladimir Jabotinsky. Neumann's account of the philosophical as well the practical conflict revolving around this basic divergence of views is given an added topicality by the abrupt and unexpected emergence, in 1977, of Jabotinsky's successor, Menahem Begin, as Prime Minister of Israel after an uninterrupted Labor Party regime of 29 years.

No doubt the rift had been implicit in the very germination of Zionism. The purely political, peremptory act of will epitomized by Herzl's incredible career was different, in essence from Aḥad Ha-Am's emphasis on culture. In reality, to be sure, both conceptions could remain diametrically opposed to each other only so long as both remained in the realm of the abstract. Ultimately, after all, both politics and culture were bound to be fused together as soon as a

Jewish community anchored itself in Palestine. For a time Weizmann distinguished himself, indeed, by pointing up their reciprocal indispensability, though at the time that, too, was no more than a rhetorical turn of phrase.

Later on a bold decision was to transcend the dilemma, when the specific military-political environment had crystallized to a point when a state was *feasible*. Neumann is surely right in ascribing to Ben-Gurion the key role in the fateful decision to launch the state *there and then* in May 1948.

But before that die was cast, during the well-nigh amorphous flux that followed the Balfour Declaration and that lasted through the Holocaust, the idea of the state was itself in flux; before it was snatched out of the unknowable and given shape and thrust by will-power and imagination alone, it was just one of many possibilities. And there Weizmann, as we can see with hindsight, was fatally incapacitated, in the long run, by his dependence on the British.

This dependence was far from merely tactical, though at a given moment it suited tactical requirements. Weizmann, as Neumann points out, was really *in love* with England, especially, no doubt, with its upper classes. Neumann records a peculiarly disconcerting remark made by Weizmann very late on, just after the State was proclaimed and Weizmann had been made provisional president. Neumann, eager for guidance, asked Weizmann just what the new government was going to do; Weizmann said, quite simply: "You see, we must find our way back to England."

Neumann sets down his reaction—"stunned and speechless." Then, in his usual fairminded way, he reflects on the reasons for Weizmann's unconquerable love of the British—his Eastern European

origins, the great traits of the cultivated English classes, his own career in England. It was only natural for Weizmann to regard himself as essentially the advocate to the Jews of British virtues, British indispensability. Thus, even after the Second World War, after two decades of mounting English treachery culminating in outright betrayal and brutality, after Great Britain had been reduced to a second-rate state, with America emerging as the new colossus—plus American Jewry!—and the Soviet Union already looming up as a premier power in the Middle East, Weizmann remained indissolubly wedded to his obsession with England.

Neumann's account sheds a different light on the equivocation of Weizmann's position during the Twenties and Thirties. In the beginning, after all, a strong segment of British official opinion had surely intended the Jews to have a real state of their own, even though the Balfour Declaration was couched in discreet, not to say sybil-line terms. It was only later that the British began veering away from the notion with increasing decisiveness as they saw, on the one hand, the mounting frictions with the Arabs, and, on the other, the degree of shilly-shallying among the Jews on the primordial question of whether they were actually aiming at a state or not.

This rift on the State, which clove to the very core of Zionism both as a movement and a philosophy, was never, to be sure, formulated with precision—a fact that made the politics of the era peculiarly tortuous. Even Neumann, for instance, is uncertain as to whether Weizmann was really against having a State at a given moment, or merely thought it prudent to avoid committing himself.

In the minds of the British, the Yishuv became increasingly pro-

lematical. Only two decades after the Balfour Declaration it was obvious that they had changed their minds about its wisdom: perhaps it is more accurate to say that its opponents—the adversaries of Jewish sovereignty—had gained the upper hand. Nor was this a consequence merely of the friction between Jews and Arabs in Palestine; Weizmann and his followers were simply reluctant to declare themselves openly for a Jewish State, while the Labor movement in Palestine, intent, in any case, on establishing a highminded way of life rather than a state, was plainly more than "soft" on the question of the Soviet Union. In the Thirties, for instance, the countless portraits of Stalin in the kibbuzim must have made it hard for pro-Zionists elements in the British government to make out a serious case for continuing to sponsor Zionism.

By the time the Nazis were flaunting abroad their dread message, the British government was more or less solidly alienated from the Yishuv. The Second World War and, in its aftermath, the evidence of the Holocaust, merely accelerated the British decision to drop the whole Zionist enterprise as a piece of dangerous futility.

Thus, the course of events themselves promoted the formation of a state in defiance of the British connection. As the British administration began floundering in the bog of its inability to shape a clear policy, Weizmann's position was systematically, though spasmodically, eroded.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, America became increasingly the background for all real politics in the Middle East; during the war years immediately beforehand, the Roosevelt entourage pursued a policy that can only be characterized as contemptible. Roosevelt's duplicity was all the more successful since it remained

an article of faith among many Jewish leaders—of whom Steven S. Wise was no doubt the most eminent—that Roosevelt was the Jews' Great White Father, practically a Messiah (Wise never called him anything but "The Chief," in deep and reverential tones).

Neumann makes it clear that Jewish gullibility vis-à-vis Roosevelt played a well-nigh fatal role, though his account is far from scornful. It would have been very easy for Neumann to amuse himself, quite legitimately, over the self-serving sycophancy of so many distinguished Jews, with many of whom he was, after all, politically at odds. The plain fact is that, at a time when the Jewish need was greater than ever before in history and when only the United States was able to do anything about it, Roosevelt, perfectly callously, simply bamboozled the Jews.

Roosevelt and Wise, accomplished actors both, would preen and strut before each other: Wise would go back to his Jewish audiences and praise "The Chief," who was busy meanwhile trotting out his charm on someone else. It is astonishing, indeed, that to this day Roosevelt's name retains a unique lustre, especially among Jews: Roosevelt, who said in 1945 that he "had learned more about the whole problem, the Muslim problem, the Jewish problem, by talking with Ibn Saud"—a fanatical ignoramus!—"for five minutes than I could have learned in the exchange of two or three dozens letters"; Roosevelt, who disregarded all appeals arising from the extinction of Eastern European Jewry, even that extinction was undeniable; who held back the American armies from the conquest of Berlin and Prague and handed Stalin seven countries and a hundred million people.

Neumann's account of the post-war period is dominated by the figure of Abba Hillel Silver, not only a

hero of Neumann's but an intimate friend and ally. Silver played a key role in disengaging American Zionists from their excessive dependence on the White House and in creating a lever of public opinion that, under Truman, successfully forced the White House into adopting a positive attitude toward Zionism. The Zionist Emergency Council, with Neumann its key figure, was to be complimented for its effectiveness by precisely those of its opponents in the government who were most annoyed by it. Neumann accepts the grudgingly given praise on behalf of himself as well as of Silver, whose range of talents—intellectual brilliance and staggering oratorical abilities—helped make the American Jewish community a wellspring of influence.

Both Silver and Neumann played a key role in the complex intrigues that led to the surrender by Great Britain of the Mandate for Palestine and the submission of the Partition Plan to the United Nations in 1947. When the new State of Israel, proclaimed in May 1948, had to be shepherded through the jungle of the United Nations, both men were instrumental in the mobilization of the American Jewish community and in the shaping of American opinion.

Neumann's balance and fair-mindedness are not merely stylistic; they seem to be part of his temperament. Occasionally, to be sure, his balance leads him astray; he cannot imagine others being *not* quite so balanced. He cannot understand, for instance, how I.F. Stone or Moshe Sneh could *really* be fanatical Stalinists (Sneh ruined a promising career in Israel by a passionate overestimation of the Soviet Union). Neumann "takes sides," quite irrelevantly to his main interests, with respect to Alger Hiss; for him, Hiss remains "innocent" of all wrongdoing simply because he

made a certain personal impression on him. Neumann cannot quite understand how an Eastern European Jew like Nahum Goldmann, even though brought up in Germany from the age of five, could *really* have supported Germany in the First World War. Even though Neumann makes a point not only of disclaiming any sympathy for Marxism but of vigorously denouncing Marx as a human being, in practical politics he seems rather vulnerable to Marxists who present themselves plausibly.

But these are trivia; the acumen and dedication that Neumann brings to his account of the past two generations, which have seen a total reversal of the Jewish position in the world, are enough to recommend it urgently to the attention of all students of the modern world. Neumann's memoir is a rich harvest of thought and feeling.

* * *

Zionists in the Diaspora may suffer from a problem of dual identity; Ben Dunkelman is not one of them.

Raised in the lap of luxury in Toronto, Canada, Ben Dunkelman has written an autobiography spanning the past sixty years or so; from a bird's eye point of view, his life may be viewed as strung taut between the two poles of his emotions—his commitment to Zionism and, practically, to Israel, and his life in Canada. The thought of balancing one commitment against another has never bothered him, any more than he has been bothered by what others might consider a certain tension between his full-fledged life in the Canadian Diaspora and his sporadic, though intense devotion to Israel.

Philosophically, to be sure, it might be thought that there is something strange about precisely the sporadic nature of that devo-

tion. From a family whose commitment to Zionism at the time—rather exceptional for affluent Western Jews—already provided it with a spiritual axis for the remarkable energies of his mother, Rose, and, to some extent, of his father, a leading figure in the Toronto Jewish business community, Ben Dunkelman established his first involvement with the Yishuv in Palestine by going there in the early Thirties, as an adolescent. That was when the Nazi Party was beginning to achieve momentum, when anti-Jewish riots had broken out among the Arabs of Palestine, and when frictions in the Jewish community itself gave the assassination of a Zionist Labor leader—Arlosoroff—an added dimension of interparty dissension.

Dunkelman, unusually powerful physically, a towering 200-pounder, as he makes clear to us, found himself in his element. He got his first taste of two of Israel's cardinal aspects—the backbreaking toil of the kibbuzim and the excitement of the conflict with the Arabs—and both were to stand him in good stead when, a half-generation later, after the intervening Second World War, he found himself once again fighting for Israel, this time as a fully authorized commander of an important segment of the newborn Israeli Army, as the confidant of Ben-Gurion and, also, of the young Rabin, who, as Prime Minister himself was to write a preface for this unusual autobiography.

Dunkelman tells his story from the vantage point of his early sixties. The reader sees spread before him a life whose peaks raise up the whole and give it what seems to be its point. Though a third of the autobiography is devoted to his experiences as an officer in the Queen's Own Regiment of the Canadian Army, (he seems to have been a remarkably violent young man,

spoiling for fighting and adventure) his own personal commitment, as it were, seems to have been forged in his Jewish consciousness. Thus, the reason why his autobiography was written is to be found in his early adolescent experiences in Palestine in the early Thirties, in his position as a commanding officer in the Israeli Army, and, stretched out between these two peaks, in his life in Canada as a Jew whose life was given meaning by those commitments.

To my mind, the oddity of this book lies precisely in the integrity that sustains what would otherwise seem a curious case of personal fragmentation. The reader who is bound to be impressed by the deeply felt emotion of Dunkelman's experiences, both in the Palestine of the Thirties and in the effervescence of the Israeli war of independence, will be, for a moment, bewildered by his abrupt switching back to Canada, where Dunkelman has, in fact, spent the bulk of his life. His bewilderment will be accentuated by the fact that Dunkelman fell in love with, and married, a young Israeli girl, herself deeply rooted in Israel, and has had six children by her. In addition it might be thought that with his business connections and know-how it might have been natural for Dunkelman to do what he himself seems to be only too well aware of as the natural thing to do—settle, after all, in the Israel he had fought for!

The actual reasons he gives for his not having done so ring a little hollow, indeed, almost like "excuses." I should think that it is this failure to achieve a true integration of himself and "practical" Zionism that points up the profundity of the yearning for integration: a couple of years spent in Palestine-Israel gave him not merely the channel for the most complete self-expression, but, also, an angle of

elevation for the whole of his life to be directed toward. Thus, what might otherwise appear to be the reminiscences of a young man's salad days—fighting, brawling, drinking, wenching—are, in fact, subsumed under an ideal powerful enough to govern the life of someone far removed, and whose return to Israel is being contemplated, it seems, by Dunkelman in his sixties only as a sort of retirement to a Mediterranean villa in Israel. Ben Dunkelman, whose physique and fury must have dismayed many an Arab, has kept himself in balance by his devotion to Israel even in periods when he was not merely a warrior but a propagandist and organizer for the Zionist movement in North America. The idea of living in Israel has provided him with a sort of spiritual outrigger that makes his comparison of himself with Yehuda Halevy—"I am in the West, but my heart is in the East" more than a merely rhetorical device.

Despite the egocentrism natural in memoirs, Dunkelman blocks any real insight into his deeper, as it were private, emotions. Nevertheless, an odd remark or two may partially explain the intensity which he applied during his bursts of activity as a fighter and organizer.

When rejoining his family in Toronto, after his initial stay in Palestine in the Thirties, he felt, he says, "like a caged animal . . . homesick for Palestine." He recalls being, in fact, "miserable," despite all creature comforts, until he got into the war for real a decade later. Meanwhile he took up his emotional slack by "partying," drinking heavily, and driving a car as though he were on his private "race-track" (p. 46).

No doubt it would be absurd to exaggerate the significance of all of this, yet in view of the stress that Dunkelman lays on his physical exuberance, his violence, and his

muscular strength, any reader is bound to feel a twinge of curiosity about just what it was that drove him into the dangerous situations that he is now recollecting in tranquility.

Dunkelman was, without doubt, a bona fide hero: not only did he win the D.S.O. as a Canadian officer, he commanded the 7th Israeli Army Brigade that won the 1948 war in the northern sector of Palestine. His account of his experiences in the newborn army, frantically being put together to withstand the combined Arab onslaught in 1948, is certainly very engaging, vivid and entertaining. It conveys an entirely unpompous but authoritative view of the improvisations, the blunders, the heroism, the devotion, the frictions and rivalries that inevitably hampered the formation of a combat organization. Seen through the prism of his own immediate experiences—no “research” is called for—his account sounds balanced, though occasionally the partisan prejudices arising out of his

role at the time produce a jarring impression three decades later. Thus, he gets off some quite unjustified sideswipes at the Revisionists that today sound curiously grotesque: he even repeats the slander about the Deir Yassin “massacre”—an Arab fabrication—as well as the pious “official” version of the *Altalena* incident (when Ben-Gurion ordered an Irgun ship to be fired on at a time when all partisan formations were being disbanded under the new central government).

Ben Dunkelman’s memoir, unencumbered by any literary pretensions, is chatty and readable. If the integration of fragments may be regarded as a Jewish propensity, it is highlighted by this work. If the unrealizable ideal that can make life meaningful lies at the end of an endless road, Ben Dunkelman’s career would seem to be a way-station along that road.

JOEL CARMICHAEL is editor of MIDSTREAM.

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

I respectfully submit that there is a middle way for Israel between the alternatives suggested by *mori verabi* Professor Ben Halpern ("The Arabs of Israel: A Test of Jewishness," JUDAISM, Fall 1977), the alternatives of "the differences in beliefs, habits, and group loyalties between Jews and Arabs (being) wiped out—either by a PLO-dominated 'secular Palestinian' state or (by) a monolithic 100% Jewish Israel, whether Canaanite or Kahaneite."

Prof. Halpern even hints at this way . . . when he says that "Sovereignty in Israel . . . requires that Jews moderate and revise isolationist traditions of the past." As a religious Jew, living in sovereign Israel, I believe that this revision should embrace not only the Histadrut, the party system and the other "secular" institutions . . . I believe it should include also the Jewish people-religion (or religion-people) as a whole. What I mean, concretely, is that we should revise our 17½-century-old negative—in any case, reluctant—attitude to proselytization . . . , humanize and rationalize conversion procedures and, in general, become once more a people that, by virtue of the ideas we profess to live by and the manner in which we live them, is capable of attracting and assimilating larger numbers of non-Jews into our midst.

Surely there is nothing in this that is incompatible with "the voice of Jacob"

or with proper treatment of the "strangers in our midst." On the contrary: It seems to me that only by thus entering four-square the free and open competition with other nations and religions in the arena of ideas and lifestyle, for the first time as a sovereign nation in our homeland since the development of what has been called "normative Judaism," will we become a truly modern nation and state.

This would not be an attempt to "impose uniformity," but merely one to start once more "acquiring" Jews by being a dynamic, creative, healthy, attractive society, a spiritually, culturally, intellectually, socially triumphant Jewish state and society of which "strangers in our midst" will wish to become an integral part—and acquiring them as our Patriarch Abraham acquired converts, not as Mohammed, Constantine and the Crusaders did, nor even in the manner that Rabbi Meir Kahane and the Canaanites propose that we do.

Of course, once having opened ourselves up in the manner I suggest, we may discover that we are not attractive to "strangers," and we may, as a result, have to reconsider the concept of our "chosenness" and the character of Judaism and of the Jewish people. I, for one, am prepared to take the risk and face the consequences.

Jerusalem, Israel

MOSHE KOHN

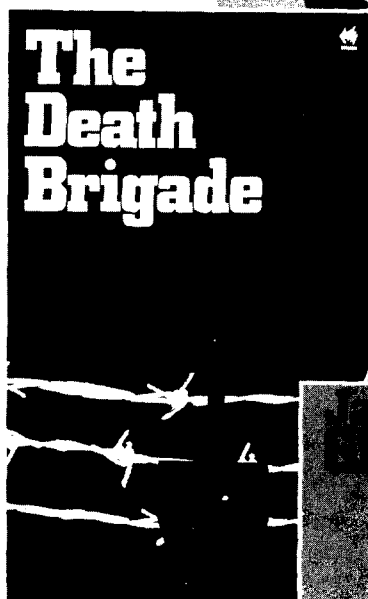
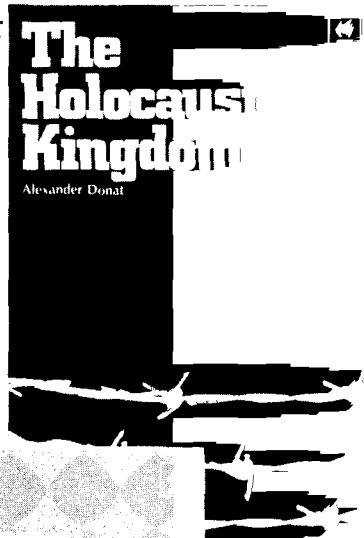
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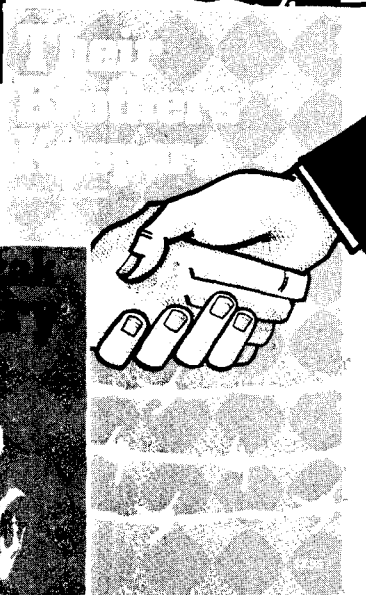
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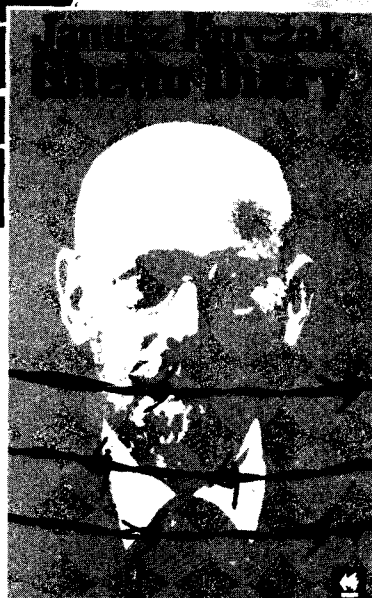
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